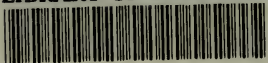


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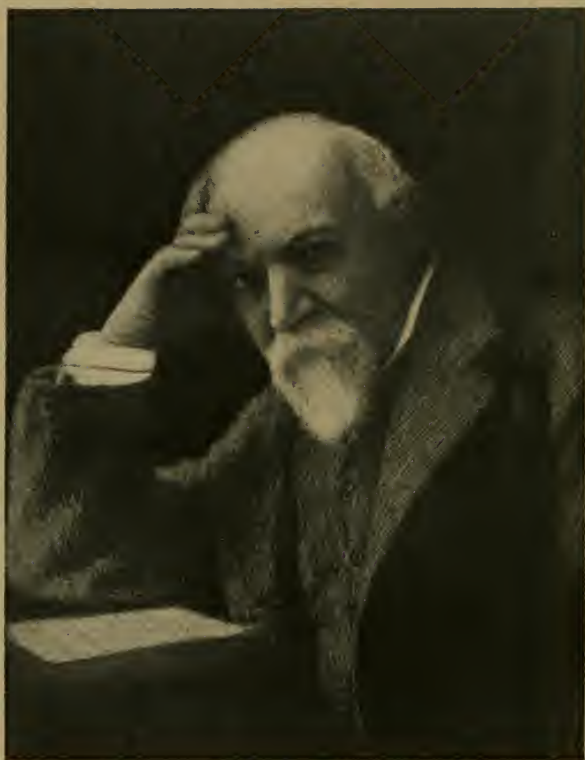












ROBERT BROWNING



# Thoughts From Browning

Selections From the Writings of  
**ROBERT BROWNING**  
For Every Day of the Year

—SELECTED AND EDITED BY—

**ANN BACHELOR** Author of  
"Carlyle Year Book," "Ruskin Year  
Book," "Thoughts From Emerson"

*"Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale  
No man hath walked along our roads with step  
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue  
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes  
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing; the breeze  
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on  
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where  
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song."*

*Walter Savage Landor.*

**JAMES H. EARLE & COMPANY**  
178 Washington Street, Boston, Mass.

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TO  
THE DEAR MEMORY OF  
MY FATHER AND MOTHER





**CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY**  
**OF**  
**BROWNING'S LIFE AND WRITINGS.**

1812.—Robert Browning, born at Camberwell, London.  
May 7. Attended private school until fourteen. Instructed  
by tutors at home.

1825.—Influenced by Shelley's poems.

1829-'30.—Attends lectures at University College, London.

1833.—"Pauline" published anonymously, January.

1833-'34.—Travels in Russia and Italy.

1835.—"Paracelsus" published.

1837.—"Strafford" published.

1840.—"Sordello" published.

1841.—Publication of "Bells and Pomegranites" begun.

'Pippa Passes" published.

1842.—"King Victor" and "King Charles" published,  
"Dramatic Lyrics" published.

1843.—"The Return of the Druses" published. "A Blot  
in the 'Scutcheon" published.

1844.—"Colombe's Birthday" published.

1845.—"Dramatic Romances and Lyrics" published.

1846.—"Luria" published. "A Sou'l's Tragedy" pub-  
lished. Married Elizabeth Barrett, September 12.

1847.—Settles in Italy, at Casa Guidi, Florence.

1849.—Birth of Robert Barrett Browning, March 9.  
Poems published, first collected edition. Death of his  
mother, March.

1850.—"Christmas-Eve" and "Easter-Day" published.

1852.—"Introductory Essay to (spurious) Letters of  
Percy Bysshe Shelley" published.

- 1855.—“Men and Women” published.
- 1861.—Mrs. Browning died at Casa Guidi, June 29.
- 1863.—Poetical Works published (in three volumes).
- 1864.—“Dramatis Personæ” published.
- 1866.—Death of his father, June 14.
- 1867.—Received the honorary degree of M.A. from the University of Oxford, and a few months later was made honorary fellow of Balliol College.
- 1868.—Poetical Works published (in six volumes).
- 1868-’69.—“The Ring and the Book” published.
- 1871.—“Ballaustion’s Adventure” published, August. Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, Savior of Society” published, December.
- 1872.—“Fifine at the Fair” published.
- 1873.—“Red Cotton Night-Cap Country, or Turf and Towers” published.
- 1875.—“Aristophanes’ Apology” published, April. “The Inn Album” published, November.
- 1876.—“Pacchiarotto” published.
- 1877.—“The Agamemnon of Æschylus” published, October.
- 1878.—“La Saisiaz; the Two Poets of Croisic, published.
- 1879.—“Dramatic Idyls” published, May. Elected President of the new Shakespeare Society.
- 1880.—“Dramatic Idyls,” second series, published, July.
- 1881.—London Browning Society holds its first meeting, October 25.
- 1883.—“Jocoseria” published, March.
- 1884.—“Ferishtah’s Fancies” published, November.
- 1887.—“Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day,” published.

1889.—“Asolando: Fancies and Facts” published, December. Robert Browning died at Venice, December 12, buried in Westminster Abbey, December 31.





## JANUARY.

Tread softly on the verge  
Of the New Year, and at its dawning fair  
Bow low thy head in reverential prayer,  
    Unheeding the sad dirge  
Of the beclouded past, so full of sin,  
From which there only comes a requiem.

Keep near the altar's fires  
Where all the year its sweetest incense burns;  
For love's pure gift the Father never spurns,  
    Or mocks the soul's desires;  
But every deed performed for His dear sake,  
A heritage of precious good He'll make.

O keep the new-born year  
As pure as when the midnight's ringing bells  
Declare that it is thine, and sweet peace tells  
    Of a loved Presence near  
To lead thy straying feet in ways of right,  
And keep thy life love-filled, each day and night.

Then hasten, happy time,  
When the dim past shall all forgotten be,  
And an unclouded future faith shall see  
    One life day, fair, sublime,  
That will begin while New Year's starlit air  
Is glorified by consecrating prayer.

MRS. M. A. HOLT.

## JANUARY 1.

For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest  
 Me, who am only Pippa,—old year's sorrow,  
 Cast off last night, will come again tomorrow;  
 Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow  
 Sufficient strength of thee for New Year's sor-  
 row.

All other men and women that this earth  
 Belongs to, who all days alike possess,  
 Make general plenty cure particular dearth,  
 Get more joy one way, if another, less;  
 Thou art my single day, God lends to leaven  
 What were all earth else, with a feel of heaven,—  
 Sole light that helps me through the year, thy  
 sun's!

PIPPA PASSES.

Even I already seem to share  
 In God's love; what does New Year's hymn de-  
 clare?

PIPPA PASSES.

## JANUARY 2.

It was eve,  
 The second of the year, and oh so cold!  
 Ever and anon there flittered through the air  
 A snow-flake, and a scanty couch of snow  
 Crusted the grass-walk and the garden-mould.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

## JANUARY 3.

See, morn at length. The heavy darkness seems  
Diluted, gray and clear without the stars;  
The shrubs bestir and rouse themselves as if  
Some snake, that weighed them down all night  
let go

His hold; and from the East, fuller and fuller  
Day, like a mighty river, flowing in;  
But clouded, wintry, desolate and cold.  
Yet see how that broad prickly star-shaped plant,  
Half-down in the crevice, spreads its woolly leaves  
All thick and glistering with diamond dew.

---

PARACELSUS.

## JANUARY 4.

Truth I say, truth I mean; this love was true,  
And the rest happened by due consequence,  
By which we are to learn that there exists  
A falsish false, for truth's inside the same,  
And truth that's only half true, falsish truth.

---

RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY.

---

Truth is the proper policy; from truth—  
Whate'er the force wherewith you fling your  
speech,—

Be sure that speech will lift you, by rebound,  
Somewhere above the lowness of a lie!

RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY.

JANUARY 5.

O God, where do they tend—these struggling  
aims?

What would I have? What is this "sleep" which  
seems

To bound all? Can there be a waking point  
Of crowning life? The soul would never rule;  
It would be first in all things, it would have  
Its utmost pleasure, but, that complete,  
Commanding, for commanding, sickens it.  
The last point I can trace is—rest beneath  
Some better essence than itself, in weakness:  
This is "myself," not what I think should be;  
And what is that I hunger for but God?

PAULINE.

JANUARY 6.

All day, I sent prayer like incense up  
To God the strong, God the beneficent,  
God ever mindful in all strife and strait,  
Who, for our own good, makes the need ex-  
treme,  
Till at last He puts forth might and saves.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

JANUARY 7.

God gives each man one life, like a lamp, then  
gives



---

That lamp due measure of oil: Lamp lighted—  
hold high, wave wide  
Its comfort for others to share.

MULÉYKEH.

---

Life is probation, and the earth no goal  
But starting point of man.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

JANUARY 8.

I go to prove my soul!  
I see my way as birds their trackless way.  
I shall arrive! What time, what circuit first,  
I ask not; but unless God sends His hail  
Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,  
In some time, His good time, I shall arrive;  
He guides me and the birds. In His good time!

PARACELSUS.

---

JANUARY 9.

Put pain from out the world, what room were left  
For thanks to God, for love to man?

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

---

To make, you must be marred,—  
To raise your race, must stoop—to teach them  
aught, must learn,

Ignorance meet half way what most you hope to  
 spurn,  
 I' the equal.

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

JANUARY 10.

We look on helplessly  
 There the old misgivings, crooked questions  
 are—  
 This good God,—what He could do if He would,  
 Would, if He could—then must have done long  
 since:  
 If so, when, where and how? Some way must  
 be,—  
 Once feel about, and soon or late you hit  
 Some sense, in which it might be, after all  
 Why not, "The Way, the Truth, the Life."

BISHOP BLOUGRAM'S APOLOGY.

JANUARY 11.

God plants us where we grow.  
 It is not that because a bud is born  
 At a wild brier's end, full i' the wild beast's way,  
 We ought to pluck and put it out of reach  
 On the oak-tree top,—say, there the bud  
 belongs!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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Each purpose ordered right: the soul's no whit  
Beyond the body's purpose under it.

SORDELLO.

---

JANUARY 12.

Then life is—to wake, not sleep,  
Rise and not rest, but press  
To the heaven's height, far and steep.

ASOLANDO.

---

But how carve way the life that lies before  
If ever bent on groaning o'er the past.

BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE.

---

JANUARY 13.

Man is not God, but hath God's end to serve,  
Somewhat to cast off, somewhat to become.  
Grant this? Then man must pass from old to  
new,  
From vain to real, from mistake to fact;  
From what once seemed good, to what now  
proves best.  
How could man have progression otherwise?

---

Progress is  
The law of life, man is not man as yet.

PARACELSUS.

---

 JANUARY 14.

Religion's all or nothing; it's no mere smile  
 O' contentment, sigh of aspiration, Sir—  
 No quality o' the finelier-tempered clay  
 Like its whiteness or its lightness; rather, stuff  
 O' the very stuff, life of life, and self of self.  
 I tell you, men won't notice; when they do,  
 They'll understand. I notice nothing else;  
 I'm eyes, ears, mouth of me, one gaze and gape,  
 Nothing eludes me, everything's a hint  
 Handle and help.

MR. SLUDGE, "THE MEDIUM."

---

JANUARY 15.

Truth inside, and outside, truth also; and  
 between  
 Each, falsehood that is change, is truth, is  
 permanence.  
 The individual soul works through the shows of  
 sense  
 (Which, ever proving false, still promise to be  
 true)  
 Up to an outer soul as individual too;  
 And, through the fleeting, lives to die into the  
 fixed  
 And reach at length, God, man, or both together  
 mixed;

Transparent through the flesh, by parts which  
    prove a whole,  
By hints which make the soul discernible by  
    soul—  
Let only soul look up, not down, not hate but  
    love,  
As truth successively takes shape, one grade  
    above  
Its last presentment, tempts as it were truth  
    indeed  
Revealed this time; so tempts, till we attain to  
    read  
The signs aright.

        FINE AT THE FAIR.

        JANUARY 16.

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,  
And all a wonder and a wild desire,—  
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,  
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,  
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,—  
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—  
When the first summons from the darkling earth  
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their  
    blue,  
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,  
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—

---

This is the same voice; can thy soul know  
change?

Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help!  
Never may I commence my song, my due  
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,  
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—  
That still, despite the distance and the dark,  
What was again may be, some interchange  
Of grace, some splendor once thy very thought,  
Some benediction, anciently thy smile;  
Never conclude, but raising hand and hand  
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn  
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,  
Their utmost up and on—so blessing back  
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy  
home,  
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes  
proud,  
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

JANUARY 17.

How inexhaustibly the spirit grows!  
One object, she seemed erewhile born to reach  
With her whole energies and die content,—  
So like a wall at the world's edge it stood,  
With naught beyond to live for,—is that  
reached?

---

Already are new undreamed energies  
Outgoing under, and extending further  
To a new object: There's another world!

LURIA.

---

Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing  
That's spirit, though cloistered fast, soar free.

PACCHIAROTTI.

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JANUARY 18.

If I stoop  
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,  
It is but for a time; I press Gid's lamp  
Close to my breast; it's splendor, soon or late  
Will pierce the gloom; I shall emerge one day.

PARACELSUS.

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Aspire, break bounds I say,  
Endeavor to be good, and better still,  
And best. Success is naught, endeavor's all.

RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY.

---

JANUARY 19.

This world's no blot for us,  
Nor blank; it means intensely and means good;  
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI.

And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost  
Is—the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin.

THE STATUE AND THE BUST.

JANUARY 20.

Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the first was made.  
Our times are in His hand  
Who saith "A whole I planned."  
Youth shows but half; trust God; see all nor be  
afraid.

RABBI BEN EZRA.

JANUARY 21.

All service ranks the same with God;  
If now, as formerly he trod  
Paradise, his presence fills  
Our earth, each only as God wills  
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst  
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not "a small event!" Why "small"?  
Costs it more pain than this, ye call  
A "great event" should come to pass,  
Than that? Untwine me from the mass  
Of deeds which make up life, one deed  
Power shall fall short in or exceed!

PIPPA PASSES.



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JANUARY 22.

If thou shalt please, dear God, if thou shalt  
please!

We are so weak, we know our motives least  
In their confused beginning. If at first  
I sought . . . but wherefore bare my heart to  
thee?

I know thy mercy, and already thoughts  
Flock fast about my soul to comfort it,  
And intimate I cannot wholly fail;  
For love and praise would clasp me willingly  
Could I resolve to seek them. Thou art good,  
And I should be content. Yet—yet first show  
I have done wrong in daring! Rather give  
The supernatural consciousness of strength  
Which fed my youth! Only one hour of that,  
With thee to help—O what should bar me then!

PARACELUS.

---

JANUARY 23.

How very hard it is to be  
A Christian! Hard for you and me,  
Not the mere task of making real—  
That duty up to its ideal,  
Effecting thus complete and whole,  
A purpose of the human soul—  
For that is always hard to do;

But hard, I mean, for me and you  
To realize it, more or less,  
With even the moderate success  
Which commonly repays our strife  
To carry out the aims of life.

"This aim is greater," you will say,  
"And so more arduous every way."

—But the importance of their fruits  
Still proves to man, in all pursuits  
Proportional encouragement.

"Then, what if it be God's intent  
That labor to this one result  
Should seem unduly difficult?"

Ah, that's a question in the dark—  
And the sole thing that I remark  
Upon the difficulty, this:

We do not see it where it is,  
At the beginning of the race;  
As we proceed, it shifts its place,  
And where we looked for crowns to fall,  
We find the tug's to come—that's all.

EASTER-DAY.

---

JANUARY 24.

It must oft fall out  
That one whose labor perfects any work  
Shall rise from it with eyes so worn that he

Of all men least can measure the extent  
 Of what he has accomplished. He alone  
 Who, nothing tasked, is nothing weary, too,  
 May clearly scan the little he effects;  
 But we, the bystanders, untouched by toil,  
 Estimate each aright.

PARACELSUS.

Would you have your songs endure?  
 Build on the human heart.

SORDELLO.

JANUARY 25.

Could we by a wish  
 Have what we will and get the future now  
 Would we wish aught done undone in the past?  
 So, let him wait God's instant men call years;  
 Meanwhile hold hard by truth and his great soul,  
 Do out the duty! Through such souls alone  
 God, stooping, shows sufficient of his light  
 For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

JANUARY 26.

Along with every act—and speech is act—  
 There go, a multitude impalpable  
 To ordinary human faculty,  
 The thoughts which give the act significance.

Who is a poet needs must apprehend  
Alike both speech and thought which prompt to  
    speak.

Part these, and thought withdraws to poetry;  
Speech is reported in the newspaper.

RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY.

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JANUARY 27.

You call for faith;  
I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists.  
The more of doubt, the stronger faith I say,  
If faith o'ercome doubt. How know I this?  
By life and man's free will, God gave for that!  
To mould life as we choose it, shows our choice;  
That's our one act, the previous work's His own.

BISHOP BLOUGRAM'S APOLOGY.

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It is faith,  
The feeling that there's God, He reigns and rules  
Out of this low world.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

JANUARY 28.

Ay, God said  
This head, this hand should rest upon  
Thus, ere He fashioned star or sun,  
And having thus created me,  
Thus rooted me, He bade me grow,

Guiltless forever, like a tree  
That buds and blooms, nor seeks to know  
The law by which it prospers so,  
But sure that thought and word and deed  
All go to swell his love for me.

JOHANNES AGRICOLA IN MEDITATION.

JANUARY 29.

But friends,  
Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise  
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.  
There is an inmost centre in us all,  
Where truth abides in fullness; and around,  
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,  
This perfect, clear perception—which is truth.

PARACELUS.

Truth is the strong thing. Let man's life be true.

IN A BALCONY.

JANUARY 30.

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!  
But not quite so sunk that moments,  
Sure though seldom, are denied us,  
When the spirit's true endowments  
Stand out plainly from its false ones,  
And appraise it if pursuing  
Or the right way or the wrong way  
To its triumph or undoing.

There are flashes struck from midnights,  
 There are fire-flames noondays kindle,  
 Whereby piled-up honors perish,  
 Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,  
 While just this or that poor impulse,  
 Which for once had play unstified,  
 Seems the sole work of a lifetime,  
 That away the rest have trifled.

CRISTINA.

JANUARY 31.

Let each task present  
 Its petty good to thee. Waste not thy gifts  
 In profitless waiting for the God's descent,  
 But have some idol of thine own to dress  
 With their array. Know, not for knowing's sake  
 But to become a star to men forever;  
 Know, for the gain it gets, the praise it brings,  
 The wonder it inspires, the love it breeds;  
 Look one step forward and secure that step.

PARACELSUS.

Oh, if we draw a circle premature,  
 Heedless of far gain,  
 Greedy for quick returns of profit sure,  
 Bad is our bargain!

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

## FEBRUARY.

I wonder if the sap is stirring yet,  
If wintry birds are dreaming of a mate,  
If frozen snowdrops feel as yet the sun,  
And crocus fires are kindling one by one:  
    Sing, robin, sing;  
I still am sore in doubt concerning spring.

I wonder if the springtide of this year  
Will bring another spring both lost and dear;  
If heart and spirit will find out their spring,  
Or if the world alone will bud and sing:  
    Sing, hope, to me;

The sap will surely quicken soon or late,  
The tardiest bird will twitter to a mate;  
So spring must dawn again with warmth and  
    bloom,  
Or in this world, or in the world to come;  
    Sing, voice of spring,  
Till I too blossom, and rejoice and sing.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

## FEBRUARY 1.

No; love which, on earth, amid all the shows  
of it,  
Has ever been seen the sole good of life in it,  
The love, ever growing there, spite of the strife  
in it,  
Shall arise, made perfect, from death's repose of  
it,  
And I shall behold thee, face to face,  
O God, and in thy light retrace  
How in all I loved here, still wast thou!

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

## FEBRUARY 2.

These are wild fancies, but I feel, sweet friend,  
As one breathing his weakness to the ear  
Of pitying angel—dear as a winter flower,  
A slight flower growing alone, and offering  
Its frail cup of three leaves to the cold sun,  
Yet joyous and confiding like the triumph  
Of a child; and why am I not worthy thee?

PAULINE.

What a thing friendship is, world without end!

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS.

## FEBRUARY 3.

True love works never for the loved one so,  
Nor spares skin-surface, smoothening truth  
away.



Love bids touch truth, endure truth and embrace  
 Truth, though embracing truth, love crush itself,  
 "Worship not me, but God!" the angels urge;  
 That is love's grandeur; still in pettier love  
 The nice eye can distinguish grade on grade.

RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY.

---

Once Truth's banner unfurled  
 Where's Falsehood? Sun-smitten, to nothing-  
 ness hurled!

PARLEYINGS.

---

FEBRUARY 4.

Why comes temptation but for man to meet  
 And master and make crouch beneath his feet  
 And so be pedestalled in triumph? Pray  
 "Lead us into no such temptation, Lord!"  
 Yea, but, O thou whose servants are the bold,  
 Lead such temptations by the head and hair,  
 Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight,  
 That so he may do battle and have praise.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

Was the trial sore?  
 Temptation sharp? Thank God a second time.

THE RING AND THE BOOK,

## FEBRUARY 5.

Such is my task. I go to gather this,  
 The sacred knowledge, here and there dispersed  
 About the world, long lost or never found,  
 And why should I be sad or lorn of hope?  
 Why ever make man's good distinct from God's,  
 Or, finding they are one, who dare mistrust?

PARACELSUS.

For God is glorified in man.

PARACELSUS.

## FEBRUARY 6.

If one step's awry, or bulge  
 Calls for correction by a step we thought  
 Got over long since, why till that is wrought,  
 No progress!

SORDELLO.

Progress is man's distinctive mark alone,  
 Not God's, and not the beast's; God is, they are,  
 Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be.

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

## FEBRUARY 7.

When sudden . . . How think ye, then end?  
 Did I say "without friend"?  
 Say rather, from marge to marge  
 The whole sky grew his targe

With the sun's self for visible boss,  
While an arm ran across  
Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast  
Where the wretch was safe prest!  
Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,  
The man sprang to his feet,  
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed,  
So I was afraid!

————— INSTANS TYRANNUS.

FEBRUARY 8.

The common problem, yours, mine, every one's,  
Is, not to fancy what were fair in life,  
Provided it could be—but, finding first  
What may be, then find how to make it fair  
Up to our means.

————— BISHOP BLOUGHRAM'S APOLOGY.

Duty be mine to tread in that high sphere  
Where love from duty ne'er disports.

————— BIFURCATION.

FEBRUARY 9.

Knowing ourselves, our world, our task so great,  
Our time so brief, 'tis clear if we refuse  
The means so limited, the tools so rude  
To execute our purpose, life will fleet,  
And we shall fade, and leave our task undone.

————— PARACELSUS.

I count life just a stuff  
To try the soul's strength on, educe the man.

IN A BALCONY.

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FEBRUARY 10.

The herded pines commune and have deep  
thoughts,  
A secret they assemble to discuss  
When the sun drops behind their trunks which  
glare  
Like gates of hell; the peerless cup afloat  
Of the lake-lily is an urn, some nymph  
Swims bearing high above her head; no bird  
Whistles unseen, but through the gaps above  
That let light in upon the gloomy woods,  
A shape peeps from the breezy forest-top,  
And with small puckered mouth and mocking  
eye.

PARACELSUS.

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FEBRUARY 11.

To have to do with nothing but the true,  
The good, the eternal—and these not alone  
In the main current of the general life,  
But small experiences of every day,  
Concerns of the particular hearth and home;  
To learn not only by a comet's rush

But by a rose's birth—not by the grandeur, God,  
But by the comfort, Christ.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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My God, my God, let me once look on Thee  
As though naught else existed, we alone!  
And as creation crumbles, my soul's spark  
Expands till I can say—even from myself  
I need Thee and I feel Thee and I love Thee.  
I do not plead my rapture in Thy works  
For love of Thee, nor that I feel as one  
Who cannot die; but there is that in me  
Which turns to Thee, which loves, or which  
should love.

PAULINE.

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FEBRUARY 12.

Over the seas our galleys went,  
With cleaving prows in order brave,  
To a speeding wind and a bounding wave  
A gallant armament.  
Each bark built out of a forest tree,  
Left leafy and rough as first it grew,  
And nailed all over the gaping sides,  
Within and without, with black bull-hides,  
Seethed in fat and suppled in flame,  
To bear the playful billows' game;  
So, each good ship was rude to see,

Rude and bare to the outward view,  
But each upbore a stately tent  
Where cedar pales in scented row  
Kept out the flakes of the dancing brine,  
And an awning drooped the mast below,  
In fold on fold of the purple fine,  
That neither noontide nor starshine  
Nor moonlight cold maketh mad,  
Might pierce the regal tenement.  
When the sun dawned, oh, gay and glad  
We set the sail and plied the oar;  
But when the night-wind blew like breath,  
For joy of one day's voyage more,  
We sang together on the wide sea,  
Like men at peace on a peaceful shore;  
Each sail was loosed to the wind so free,  
Each helm made sure by the twilight star,  
And in a sleep as calm as death,  
We, the voyagers from afar,  
Lay stretched along, each weary crew  
In a circle round its wondrous tent  
Whence gleamed soft light and curled rich scent,  
And with light and perfume, music, too.  
So the stars wheeled round, and the darkness  
past,  
And at morn we started beside the mast,  
And still each ship was sailing fast.

Now, one morn land appeared—a speck  
Dim trembling, betwixt sea and sky.  
“Avoid it,” cried our pilot, “check  
The shout, restrain the eager eye!”  
But the heaving sea was black behind  
For many a night and many a day,  
And land, though but a rock, drew nigh.  
So we broke the cedar pales away,  
Let the purple awning flap in the wind,  
And a statue bright was on every deck!  
We shouted, every man of us,  
And steered right into the harbor thus,  
With pomp and pæan glorious.

A hundred shapes of lurid stone!  
All day we built its shrine for each,  
A shrine of rock for every one,  
Nor paused till in the westering sun  
We sat together on the beach  
To sing because our task was done.  
When lo! what shouts and merry songs!  
What laughter all the distance stirs!  
A loaded raft with happy throngs  
Of gentle islanders!  
“Our isles are just at hand,” they cried,  
“Like cloudlets faint in even sleeping.  
Our temple-gates are opened wide,  
Our olive groves thick shades are keeping

For these majestic forms," they cried.  
 Oh, then we awoke with sudden start  
 From our deep dream, and knew, too late,  
 How bare the rock, how desolate,  
 Which had received our precious freight.  
 Yet we called out, "Depart!  
 Our gifts once given, must here abide.  
 Our work is done; we have no heart  
 To mar our work," we cried.

PARACELBUS.

FEBRUARY 13.

Not that, amassing flowers,  
 Youth sighed, "which rose makes ours,  
 Which lily leave and then as best recall?"  
 Not that, admiring stars,  
 It yearned "Not Jove, nor Mars;  
 Mine be some figured flame which blends, trans-  
 cends them all!"

RABBI BEN EZRA.

FEBRUARY 14.

There is no good in life but love—but love!  
 What else looks good, is some shade flung from  
 love;  
 Love gilds it, gives it worth.

IN A BALCONY.

Make life a ministry of love and it will always  
 be worth living.



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FEBRUARY 15.

Life to come will be an improvement on the  
life's that now; destroy  
Body's thwartings, there's no longer screen be-  
twixt soul and soul's joy.  
Why should we expect new hindrance, novel  
tether? In this first  
Life, I see the good of evil, why our world began  
at worst;  
Since time means amelioration, tardily enough  
displayed,  
Yet a mainly onward moving, never wholly  
retrograde.  
We know more though we know little, we grow  
stronger though still weak,  
Partly see, through all too purblind, stammer  
though we cannot speak.  
There is no such grudge in God as scared the  
ancient Greek.

LA SAISIAZ.

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FEBRUARY 16.

All human plans and projects come to naught;  
My life and what I know of other lives  
Prove that; no plan nor project! God shall care!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

Ay, God remains,  
Even did men forsake you.

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.

FEBRUARY 17.

Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place.  
Hail to your purlieus  
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,  
Swallows and curlews!  
Here's the top-peak! The multitude below  
Live, for they can there.  
This man decided not to live but know —  
Bury this man there?  
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot,  
clouds form,  
Lightnings are loosened,  
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the  
storm—  
Peace let the dew send.  
Lofty designs must close in like effects;  
Loftily lying,  
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,  
Living and dying.

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

FEBRUARY 18.

The swallow has set her six young on the rail,  
And looks seaward;

The water's in stripes like a snake, olive-pale,  
 To the leeward,—  
 On the weather-side, black, spotted white with  
 the wind,  
 "Good fortune departs, and disaster's behind"—  
 Hark the wind with its wants and its infinite wail!

JAMES LEE'S WIFE.

FEBRUARY 19.

There is a vision in the heart of each  
 Of justice, mercy, wisdom, tenderness  
 To wrong and pain, and knowledge of its cure,  
 And these embodied in a woman's form  
 That best transmits them, pure as first received  
 From God above her, to mankind below.

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

I will tell  
 God's message; but I have so much to say,  
 I fear to leave half out.

PARACELSUS.

FEBRUARY 20.

The morn has enterprise, deep quiet droop  
 With evening, triumph takes the sunset hour.  
 Voluptuous transport ripens with the corn  
 Beneath a warm moon like a happy face;  
 And this to fill us with regard for man,  
 With apprehensions of his passing worth,

Desire to work his proper nature out,  
 And ascertain his rank and final place.  
 For these things tend still upward.

PARACELSUS.

FEBRUARY 21.

Let her but love you,  
 All else you disregard! What else can be?  
 You know how love is incompatible  
 With falsehood—purifies, assimilates  
 All other passions to itself.

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

Such was ever love's way; to rise it stoops.

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

FEBRUARY 22.

'Tis fruitless for mankind  
 To fret themselves with what concerns them not;  
 They are no use that way; they should lie down  
 Content as God has made them, nor go mad  
 In thriveless cares to better what is ill.

PARACELSUS.

All is as God overrules.  
 Beside, incentive comes from the soul's self;  
 The rest avail not.

ANDREA DEL SARTO.

FEBRUARY 23.

Then welcome each rebuff  
That turns earth's smoothness rough,  
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go!  
Be our joy three parts pain!  
Strive and hold cheap the strain;  
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge  
the throe!

RABBI BEN EZRA.

FEBRUARY 24.

God! Thou art mind! Unto the master-mind  
Mind should be precious. Spare my mind alone!  
All else I will endure, if, as I stand  
Here, with my gains, Thy thunder smite me  
down,  
I bow me; 'tis Thy will, Thy righteous will;  
I o'erpass life's restrictions, and I die,  
And if no trace of my career remain  
Save a thin corporeal pleasure of the mind  
In the bright chambers level with the air,  
See Thou to it! But if my spirit fail,  
My once proud spirit forsake me at the last,  
Hast Thou done well by me? So do not Thou!  
Crush not my mind, dear God, though I be  
crushed!

PARACELBUS.

FEBRUARY 25.

Weakness never need be falseness;  
 Truth is truth in each degree,  
 Thunder pealed by God to Nature,  
 Whispered by my soul to me.

LA SAISIAZ.

Well, now, there's nothing in nor out o' the  
 world  
 Good, except truth.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

FEBRUARY 26.

We all aspire to heaven, and there lies heaven  
 Above us; go there! Dare we go? No, surely!  
 How dare we go without a reverent pause,  
 A growing less unfit for heaven?

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.

There grows in every heart, as in a shrine,  
 The giant image of perfection.

PARACELSUS.

FEBRUARY 27.

God takes an infinite joy  
 In infinite ways—one everlasting bliss  
 From which all being emanates, all power  
 Proceeds; in whom is life forevermore,  
 Yet whom existence in its lowest form

Includes. Where dwells enjoyment, there dwells  
He

PARACELSUS.

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See God's approval on His universe!  
Let us do so—aspire to live as these  
In harmony with truth, ourselves being true.

IN A BALCONY.

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FEBRUARY 28.

And what is our fulness here but a triumph's  
evidence  
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered  
or agonized?  
Why else was the praise prolonged but that sing-  
ing might issue theme?  
Why rushed the discord in, but that harmony  
should be prized?  
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to  
clear,  
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal  
and woe;  
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in  
the ear;  
The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musi-  
cians know.

ABT VOGLER.

There is no truer truth obtainable  
By man, than comes by music.

PARLEYINGS.

FEBRUARY 29.

No doubt, men vastly differ: and we need  
Some strange, exceptional benevolence  
Of nature's sunshine to develop seed  
So well, in the less-favored clime, that thence  
We may discern how shrub means tree indeed,  
Though dwarfed till scarcely shrub in evidence.  
Man in the ice-house or the hot-house ranks  
With beasts or gods; stove-faced, give warmth  
the thanks.

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIR.

O pale departure, dim disgrace of day!  
Winter's in wane his vengeful worst art thou  
To dash the boldness of advancing March!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.



MARCH.

THE BLEAK O' THE YEAR.

There is a time of subtle browns, and grays  
That run to silverings, and tremulous greens,  
And russet tints, and ash-pale pools of leaves;  
Of ghostly mosses and elusive grass  
That's neither lush nor dead; of naked trees  
Ineffably harmonious with the sky  
That stretches vast and neutral, tone on tone  
Not to call a color, but a thought.

To some this is a barren time, a sleep  
Between the winter and the spell of spring:  
To me it is the heart's own time and tide,  
Being hidden from the heedless eye that lusts  
For flaring lights and sunset dyes, yet charged  
With secrets rare, and blendings into dreams,  
And ecstasies divine that shadow forth  
A mystery, the Selah of the Soul.

RICHARD BURTON.

## MARCH 1.

The morn when first it thunders in March,  
 The eel in the pond gives a leap, they say;  
 As I leaned and looked over the aloed arch  
 Of the villa-gate this warm March day.

OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE.

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## MARCH 2.

The bee with his comb,  
 The mouse at her dray,  
 The grub at his tomb,  
 While winter away;  
 But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm,  
 I pray,  
 How fare they?

PIPPA PASSES.

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## MARCH 3.

Let law shine forth and show, as God in heaven,  
 Vice prostrate, virtue pedestalled at last,  
 The triumph of truth!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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Into the truth of things,  
 Out of their falseness rise, and reach thou, and  
 remain.

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

MARCH 4.

The centre fire heaves underneath the earth,  
And the earth changes like a human face;  
The molten ore bursts up among the rocks,  
Winds into the stone's heart, outbranches bright  
In hidden mines, spots barren riverbeds.  
Crumbles into fine sand where sunbeams bask—  
God joys therein. The wroth sea's waves are  
edged

With foam, white as the bittern lips of hate,  
When, in the solitary waste strange groups  
Of young volcanoes come up, Cyclops-like,  
Staring together with their eyes on flame—  
God tastes a pleasure in their uncouth pride,  
Then all is still; earth is a wintry clod,  
But spring-wind, like a dancing psaltress, passes  
Over its breast to waken it, rare verdure  
Buds tenderly upon rough banks, between  
The withered tree-roots and the cracks of frost,  
Like a smile striving with a wrinkled face;  
The grass grows bright, the boughs are swol'n  
with blooms

Like chrysalids impatient for the air;  
The shining doves are busy, beetles run  
Along the furrows, ants make their ado,  
Above birds fly in merry flocks, the lark  
Soars up and up, shivering for very joy;

Afar the ocean sleeps; white fishing-gulls  
 Flit where the strand is purple with its tribe  
 Of nested limpets; savage creatures seek  
 Their loves in wood and plain—and God renews  
 His ancient rapture. Thus He dwells in all  
 From life's minute beginnings, up at last  
 To man—the consummation of this scheme  
 Of being, the completion of this sphere  
 Of life, whose attributes had here and there  
 Been scattered o'er the visible world before  
 Asking to be combined, dim fragments meant  
 To be united in some wondrous whole,  
 Imperfect qualities throughout creation,  
 Suggesting some one creature yet to make,  
 Some point where all those scattered rays should  
     meet  
 Convergent in the faculties of man.

PARACELSUS.

MARCH 5.

Oh, what a dawn of day!  
 How the March sun feels like May!  
     All is blue again  
     After last night's rain,  
 And the South dries the hawthorn spray.  
 Only my love's away!  
 I'd as lief the blue were gray.

A LOVERS' QUARREL.

MARCH 6.

I trust in nature for the stable laws  
Of beauty and utility. Spring shall plant,  
And autumn garner to the end of time.  
I trust in God—the right shall be the right  
And other than the wrong, while He endures;  
I trust in my own soul, that can perceive  
The outward and the inward, nature's good,  
And God's.

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.

MARCH 7.

That was I you heard last night  
When there rose no moon at all,  
Nor, to pierce the strained and tight  
Tent of heaven, a planet small.  
Life was dead, and so was light.

Not a twinkle from the fly,  
Not a glimmer from the worm,  
When the crickets stopped their cry,  
When the owls forbore a term,  
You heard music; that was I.

Earth turned in her sleep with pain,  
Sultrily suspired for proof,  
In at heaven and out again,  
Lightning!—where it broke the roof,  
Bloodlike, some few drops of rain.

What they could my words expressed,  
 O my love, my all, my one!  
 Singing helped the verses best,  
 And when singing's best was done,  
 To my lute I left the rest.

So wore night; the east was gray,  
 White the broad-faced hemlock flowers;  
 Soon would come another day;  
 Ere its first of heavy hours  
 Found me I had passed away.

A SERENADE AT THE VILLA.

MARCH 8.

Could you but know what 'tis to bear, my friend,  
 One image stamped within you, turning blank,  
 A weakness, but most precious, like a flaw  
 I' the diamond, which should shape forth some  
 sweet face  
 Yet to create, and meanwhile treasured there  
 Lest nature lose her gracious thought forever!

STRAFFORD.

MARCH 9.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored eve  
 Smiles to leave  
 To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece  
 In such peace,

And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray  
Melt away—

That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair  
Waits me there  
In a turret, whence the charioteers caught soul  
For the goal,  
When the king looked, where she looks now,  
breathless, dumb,  
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,  
Far and wide,  
All the mountains topped with temples, all the  
glades'  
Collonades,  
All the causeys, bridges, queducts—and then  
All the men!

When I do come, she will speak not, she will  
stand,  
Either hand  
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace  
Of my face,  
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech  
Each on each.      LOVE AMONG THE RUINS.

MARCH 10.

Dared and done; at last I stand upon the summit, dear and true!  
Singly dared and done, the climbing both of us were bound to do.  
Petty beat, and yet prodigious; every side my glance was bent  
O'er the grandeur and the beauty lavished through the whole ascent.  
Ledge by ledge, outbroke new marvels, now minute and now immense;  
Earth's most exquisite disclosure, heaven's own God in evidence!  
And no berry in its hiding, no blue space in its outspread,  
Pleaded to escape my footstep, challenged my emerging head,  
(As I climbed, or paused from climbing, now o'erbranched by shrub and tree,  
Now built round by rock and boulder, now at just a turn set free,  
Stationed face to face with—Nature? Rather with Infinitude,)  
No revelation of them all, as singly, I my path pursued,  
But a bitter touched in sweetness, for the thought stung. Even so



Both of us had loved and wondered just the  
same, five days ago!

LA SAISIAZ.

MARCH 11.

I find first  
Writ down for very A B C of fact,  
In the beginning God made heaven and earth,  
From which, no matter with what lisp, I spell  
And speak you out a consequence—that man,  
Man—as befits the made, the inferior thing—  
Purposed, since made, to grow, not make, in  
turn,  
Yet forced to try and make, else fail to grow;  
Formed to rise, reach at, if not grasp and gain  
The good beyond him—which attempt is  
growth—  
Repeats God's process in man's due degree  
Attaining man's proportionate result.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

MARCH 12.

Ever some spiritual witness new and new  
In faster frequency, crowding solitude  
To watch the way o' the warfare—till at last,  
When the ecstatic moment must bring birth,  
Began a whiteness in the distance, waxed  
Whiter and whiter, near grew and more near,

Till it was she. There did Pompilia come.  
The white I saw shine through her was her soul.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

The snow-white soul that angels fear to take  
Untenderly.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

MARCH 13.

Alack, one lies one's self  
Even in the stating that one's end was truth,  
Truth only, if one states as much in words!  
Give me the inner chamber of the soul  
For obvious easy argument! 'Tis there  
One pits the silent truth against a lie—  
Truth which breaks shell a careless simple bird,  
Nor wants a gorget nor a beak filed fine,  
Steel spurs and the whole armory o' the tongue,  
To equalize the odds. But, do your best,  
Words have to come, and somehow words deflect  
As the best cannon ever rifled will.

PRINCE HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU.

Measure your mind's height by the shade it casts.

PARACELsus.

MARCH 14.

Prognostics told  
Man's near approach; so in man's self arise  
August anticipations, symbols, types

Of a dim splendor ever on before  
In that eternal circle life pursues.  
For men begin to pass their nature's bound,  
And find new hopes and cares which fast sup-  
plant  
Their proper joys and griefs; they grow too great  
For narrow creeds of right and wrong, which  
fade  
Before the unmeasured thirst for good; while  
peace  
Rises within them ever more and more.  
Such men are even now upon the earth,  
Serene amid the half-formed creatures round  
Who should be saved by them and joined with  
them.

PARACELSUS.

MARCH 15.

Well, is the thing we see salvation?  
I put no such dreadful question to myself,  
Within whose circle of experiences burns  
The central truth, Power, Wisdom, Goodness,  
God;  
I must outline a thing ere know it dead;  
When I outlive the faith there is a sun,  
When I lie, ashes to the very soul—  
Some one, not I, must wail above the heap,  
"He died in dark whence never morn arose."  
While I see day succeed the deepest night—

How can I speak but as I know? My speech  
Must be, throughout the darkness, "It will end;  
The light that did burn, will burn!" Clouds  
obscure—

But for which obscuration all were bright?  
Too hastily concluded! Sun-suffused,  
A cloud may soothe the eye made blind by  
blaze—

Better the very clarity of heaven;  
The soft streaks are the beautiful and dear.  
What but the weakness in a faith supplies  
The incentive to humanity, no strength  
Absolute, irresistible, comforts?  
How can man love but what he yearns to help?  
And that which men think weakness within  
strength,

But angels know for strength, and stranger yet—  
What were it else but the first things made new,  
But repetition of the miracle,  
The divine instance of self-sacrifice  
That never ends and aye begins for man?  
So, never I miss footing in the maze,  
No, I have light nor fear the dark at all.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

MARCH 16.

So when spring comes  
With sunshine back again like an old smile,

And the fresh waters and awakened birds  
 And budding woods await us, I shall be  
 Prepared, and we will question life once more,  
 Till its old sense shall come renewed by change,  
 Like some dear thought which harsh words  
     veiled before;

Feeling, God loves us, and that all which errs  
 Is but a dream which death will dissipate.

PAULINE.

MARCH 17.

God be thanked, the meanest of His creatures  
 Boasts two soul sides, one to face the world  
     with,

One to show a woman when he loves her!

ONE WORD MORE.

Oh, never work

Like his was done for work's ignoble sake—

Soul's need a fairer aim to light and love!

I felt, I saw, he loved—loved somebody.

IN A BALCONY.

MARCH 18.

Let Spring come; why, a man salutes her thus:

Dance, yellows and whites and reds,—

Lead your gay orgy, leaves, stalks, heads

Astir with the wind in the tulip-beds!

There's sunshine; scarcely a wind at all  
 Disturbs starred grass and daisies small  
 On certain mound by a churchyard wall.

Daisies and grass be my heart's bedfellows  
 On the mound wind spares and sunshine  
 mellows,  
 Dance you, reds and whites and yellows.

PARLEYINGS.

MARCH 19.

Our of your whole life give but a moment!  
 All of your life that has gone before,  
 All to come after it,—so you ignore,  
 So you make perfect the present,—condense,  
 In a rapture of rage, for perfection's endowment,  
 Thought and feeling and soul and sense—  
 Merged in a moment which gives me at last  
 You around me for once, you beneath me, above  
 me,

Me—sure that despite of time future, time past,  
 This tick of our life-time's one moment you love  
 me!

How long such suspension may linger? Ah,  
 sweet—

The moment eternal—just that and no more—  
 When ecstasy's utmost we clutch at the core  
 While cheeks burn, arms open, eyes shut and lips  
 meet!

Now.

MARCH 20.

Now for this twentieth splendid day of Spring:  
All in a tale,—sun, wind, sky, earth and sea—  
To bid man, “Up, be doing!”

RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY.

As one Spring wind unbinds the mountain snow  
And comforts violets in their hermitage.

PARACELSUS.

MARCH 21.

I have but to be by thee, and thy hand  
Will never let mine go, nor heart withstand,  
The beating of my heart to reach its place.  
When shall I look for thee and feel thee gone?  
When cry for the old comfort and find none?  
Never I know. Thy soul is in thy face.

ANY WIFE TO ANY HUSBAND.

MARCH 22.

Morning, evening, noon, and night,  
“Praise God!” sang Theocrite.  
When to his poor trade he turned,  
Whereby the daily bread he earned

. . . . .

But ever at each period  
He stopped and sang, “Praise God.”

. . . . .

Said Blaise, the listening monk, “Well done;

I doubt not thou art heard, my son;  
 As well as if thy voice today  
 Were praising God the Pope's great way."

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

MARCH 23.

Say, this life,  
 I lead now, differs from the common life  
 Of other men in mere degree, not kind,  
 Of joys and griefs,—still there is such degree  
 Mere largeness in a life is something sure,—  
 Enough to care about and struggle for,  
 In this world; for that to come, no doubt  
 A great is better than a little aim.

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

But though I cannot soar, I do not crawl.

PARACELSUS.

MARCH 24.

Come, I will show you where my merit lies.  
 'Tis in the advance of individual minds  
 That the slow crowd should ground their expect-  
     tation  
 Eventually to follow; as the sea  
 Waits ages in its bed till some one wave  
 Out of the multitudinous mass, extends  
 The empire of the whole, some feet perhaps,  
 Over the strip of sand which could confine



Its fellows so long time; thenceforth the rest,  
 Even the meanest, hurry in at once,  
 And so much clear is gained. I shall be glad  
 If all my labors, failing of aught else,  
 Suffice to make such inroad and procure  
 A wider range for thought; nay, they do this.

PARACELSUS.

MARCH 25.

The race of Man

That receives life in parts to live in a whole,  
 \*And grow here according to God's clear plan.

Growth came when, looking your last on them  
 all,

You turned your eyes inwardly one fine day  
 And cried with a start—What if we so small  
 Be greater and grander the while than they?  
 Are they perfect of lineament, perfect of stature?  
 In both, of such lower types are we  
 Precisely because of our wider nature;  
 For time, theirs—ours, for eternity.

OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE.

MARCH 26.

For lo, what think you? Suddenly  
 The rain and the wind ceased, and the sky  
 Received at once the full fruition

Of the moon's consummate apparition.  
The black cloud-barricade was riven,  
Ruined beneath her feet, and driven  
Deep in the west, while bare and breathless,  
North and South and East lay ready  
For a glorious thing that, dauntless, deathless,  
Sprang across them and stood steady  
'Twas a moon rainbow, vast and perfect  
As the mother-moon's self, full in the face  
It rose, distinctly at the base,  
With its seven proper colors chorded,  
Which still in rising, were compressed,  
Until at last they coalesced,  
And supreme the creature lorded  
In a triumph of whitest white,—  
Above which intervened the night;  
But above night, too, like only the next,  
The second of a wond'rous sequence,  
Reaching in rare and rarer frequency.  
Till the heaven of heavens were circumflexed,  
Another rainbow rose, a mightier,—  
Fainter, flushier and flightier,—  
Rapture dying along its verge.  
O, whose foot shall I see emerge,  
Whose, from the straining topmost dark,  
On to the keynote of that arc?

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

MARCH 27.

Sun-treader, life and light be thine forever!  
Thou art gone from us; years go by and spring  
Gladdens and the young earth is beautiful,  
Yet thy songs come not, other bards arise,  
But none like thee: they stand, thy majesties,  
Like mighty works which tell some spirit there  
Hath sat regardless of neglect and scorn,  
Till, its long task completed, it hath risen  
And left us, never to return, and all  
Rush in to peer and praise when all in vain.  
The air seems bright with thy past presence yet,  
But thou art still for me as thou hast been  
When I have stood with thee as on a throne  
With all thy dim creations gathered round  
Like mountains, and I felt of mould like them,  
And with them creatures of my own were mixed,  
Like things half-lived, catching and giving life.  
But thou art still for me who have adored,  
Tho' single, panting but to hear thy name,  
Which I believed a spell to me alone,  
Scarce deeming thou wast as a star to men!  
As one should worship long a sacred spring  
Scarce worth a moth's flitting, which long  
    grasses cross,  
And one small tree embowers droopingly—  
Joying to see some wandering insect won  
To live in its few rushes, or some locust

To pasture on its boughs, or some wild bird  
 Stoop for its freshness from the trackless air:  
 And then should find it but the fountain-head,  
 Long lost, of some great river washing towns  
 And towers, and seeing old woods which will  
 live

But by its banks untrod of human foot,  
 Which, when the great sun sinks, lie quivering  
 In light as some thing lieth half of life  
 Before God's foot, waiting a wond'rous change;  
 Then girt with rocks which seek to turn or stay  
 Its course in vain, for it does ever spread  
 Like a sea's arm as it goes rolling on,  
 Being the pulse of some great country—so  
 Wast thou to me, and art thou to the world!

PAULINE.

MARCH 28.

Though winter be over in March by rights,  
 'Tis May, perhaps, ere the snow shall have with-  
 ered well off the heights;  
 You've the brown ploughed land before, where  
 the oxen steam and wheeze,  
 And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint  
 gray olive-trees.

UP AT A VILLA.

With God a day endures always,  
 A thousand years are but a day.

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

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MARCH 29.

That low man seeks a little thing to do,  
Sees it and does it;  
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,  
Dies ere he knows it.  
That low man goes on adding one to one,  
His hundred's soon hit;  
That high man, aiming at a million,  
Misses a unit.

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

---

Unless above himself he can  
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!

---

MARCH 30.

Ask the gier-eagle why she stoops at once  
Into the vast and unexplored abyss,  
What full-grown power informs her from the  
first,  
Why she not marvels, strenuously beating  
The silent boundless regions of the sky.

PARACELSUS.

---

Belief or unbelief  
Bears upon life, determines its whole course,  
Begins at its beginning.

BISHOP BLOUGHRAM'S APOLOGY.

MARCH 31.

All's over, then—does truth sound bitter  
As one at first believes?  
Hark! 'tis the sparrow's good night twitter  
About your cottage eaves.

And the leaf-buds on the vines are wolly,  
I noticed that today;  
One day more bursts them open fully—  
You know the red turns gray.

Tomorrow we meet the same then, dearest?  
May I take your hand in mine?  
Mere friends are we,—well, friends the merest  
Keep much that I'll resign.

For each glance of that eye so bright and black,  
Though I keep with heart's endeavor,—  
You voice, when you with the snowdrops back,  
Though it stays in my soul forever!

Yet I will but say what mere friends say,  
Or only a thought stronger;  
I will hold your hand as long as all may,  
Or so very little longer!

THE LOST MISTRESS.

## APRIL.

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
O sweet New-Year delaying long:  
Thou doest expectant nature wrong;  
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
Thy sweetness from its proper place?  
Can trouble live with April days,  
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchids, bring the foxglove spire,  
The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
That longs to burst a frozen bud,  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

. . . . .  
Now fades the last long streak of snow;  
Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drowned in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
 And milkier every milky sail  
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the sea-mew pipes, or drives  
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
 The happy birds, that change their sky  
 To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast  
 Spring wakens, too; and my regret  
 Becomes an April violet,  
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

TENNYSON.

APRIL 1.

Sure, he's arrived  
 The tell-tale cuckoo; Spring his confidant,  
 And he lets out her April purposes.

PIPPA PASSES.

Now comes the story of the farm among  
 The cherry orchards, and how April snowed  
 White blossoms on her as she ran.

PIPPA PASSES.

APRIL 2.

Thou wilt remember one warm morn when  
 winter  
 Crept aged from the earth, and spring's first  
 breath



Blew soft from the moist hills, the blackthorn  
boughs,  
So dark in the bare wood, when glistening  
In the sunshine were white with coming buds,  
Like the bright side of a sorrow, and the banks  
Had violets opening from sleeplike eyes.

PAULINE.

APRIL 3.

Oh, to be in England,  
Now that April's there,  
And whoever wakes in England  
Sees some morning, unaware,  
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood  
sheaf  
'Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,  
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough,  
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,  
And the white throat builds, and all the swal-  
lows—  
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the  
hedge  
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover  
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's  
edge—

That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice  
 over,  
 Lest you should think he never could recapture  
 The first fine careless rapture!  
 And though the fields look rough with hoary  
 dew,  
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew  
 The buttercups, the little children's dower,  
 Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD.

APRIL 4.

Up, for the glowing day, leave the old woods!  
 See, they part like a ruined arch the sky!  
 Nothing but sky appears, so close the roots  
 And grasses of the hill-top level with the air—  
 Blue sunny air, where a great cloud floats laden  
 With light, like a dead whale that white birds  
 pick,  
 Floating away in the sun in some north sea.  
 Air, air, fresh life-blood, thin and searching air,  
 The clear, dear breath of God that loveth us.

PAULINE.

APRIL 5.

The year's at the Spring,  
 And day's at the morn:  
 Morning's at seven:

The hillside's dew-pearled:  
The lark's on the wing:  
The snail's on the thorn:  
God's in his heaven—  
All's right with the world!

PIPPA PASSES.

APRIL 6.

The woods were long austere with snow; at last  
Pink leaflets budded on the beach, and fast  
Larches, scattered through pine-tree solitudes,  
Brightened, as in the slumb'rous heart o' the  
woods  
Our buried year.

SORDELLO.

Water is beautiful, but not like air:  
See, where the solid azure waters lie,  
Made as of thickened air, and down below,  
The fern-ranks like a forest spread themselves  
As though each pore could feel the element.

PAULINE.

APRIL 7.

You'll love me yet!—and I can tarry  
Your love's protracted growing:  
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry,  
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartful now; some seed  
 At least is sure to strike,  
 And yield—what you'll not pluck indeed,  
 Not love, but, maybe, like.

You'll look at least on love's remains,  
 A grave's one violet:  
 Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.  
 What's death? You'll love me yet!

PIPPA PASSES.

APRIL 8.

If I call "saint" what saints call something else—  
 The saints must bear with me, impute the fault  
 To a soul i' the bud, so starved by ignorance,  
 Stinted of warmth, it will not blow this year  
 Nor recognize the orb which Spring-flowers  
 know.

But if meanwhile some insect with a heart  
 Worth floods of lazy music, spendthrift joy—  
 Some firefly renounced Spring for my dwarfed  
 cup,

Crept close to me, brought lustre for the dark,  
 Comfort against the cold,—what though excess  
 Of comfort should miscall the creature—sun?  
 What did the sun to hinder while harsh hands  
 Petal by petal, crude and colorless,  
 Tore me? This one heart gave me all the Spring!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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 APRIL 9.

Gladness be with thee, Helper of our world!  
 I think this is the authentic sign and seal  
 Of Godship, that it ever waxes glad,  
 And more glad, until gladness blossoms, bursts  
 Into a rage to suffer for mankind.  
 And recommence at sorrow: drops like seed  
 After the blossom, ultimate of all.  
 Say, does the seed scorn earth and seek the sun?  
 Surely it has no other end and aim  
 Than to drop, one more die into the ground,  
 Taste cold and darkness and oblivion, there:  
 And thence rise, tree-like grow through pain to  
     joy,  
 More joy and most joy,—do man good again.

BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE.

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APRIL 10.

But Easter-Day breaks! But  
 Christ rises! Mercy every way  
 Is infinite,—and who shall say?

EASTER-DAY.

---

But at the close a Hand came through  
 The fire above my head, and drew  
 My soul to Christ, whom now I see.

EASTER-DAY.

APRIL 11.

O Thou,—as represented here to me  
 In such conception as my soul allows,—  
 Under thy measureless, my atom width!  
 Man's mind, what is it but a convex glass  
 Wherein are gathered all the scattered points  
 Picked out of the immensity of sky,  
 To reunite there, be our heaven for earth,  
 Our known unknown, our God revealed to man?

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

God is the perfect poet,  
 Who in his person acts his own creation.

PARACELSUS.

APRIL 12.

All at once I looked up with terror.  
 He was there.  
 He himself with His human air,  
 On the narrow pathway, just before  
 I saw the back of Him, no more—

. . . . .  
 No face: only the sight  
 Of a sweepy garment, vast and white,  
 With a hem that I could recognize.

. . . . .  
 Soul of mine, hadst thou caught and held  
 By the hem of the vesture!—and I caught

At the flying robe, and unrepelled  
Was lapped in its folds full-fraught  
With warmth and wonder and delight,  
God's mercy being infinite.

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

APRIL 13.

Good to forgive;  
Best to forget;  
Living we fret;  
Dying we live.  
Fretless and free,  
Soul clap thy pinion!  
Earth have dominion,  
Body o'er thee!

Wander at will  
Day after day—  
Wander away,  
Wandering still—  
Soul thou canst soar!  
Body may slumber,  
Body shall cumber  
Soul-flights no more.

Wafts of soul's wings!  
What lies above?  
Sunshine and love!

Body hides—where?  
 Ferns of all feather,  
 Mosses and heather,  
 Yours be the care.

LA SAISIAZ.

APRIL 14.

Today's brief passion limits their range;  
 It seethes with the morrow for us and more.  
 They are perfect—how else? They shall never  
 change;  
 We are faulty—why not? We have time in  
 store.

The Artificer's hand is not arrested  
 With us; we are rough-hewn, nowise polished;  
 They stand for our copy, and, once invested  
 With all they can teach, we shall see them  
 abolished.

'Tis a life-long toil till our lump be leaven—  
 The better! What's come to perfection  
 perishes.

Things learned on earth, we shall practise in  
 heaven;

Works done least rapidly, Art most cherishes.  
 Thyself shall afford the example, Giotto!

Thy one work, not to decrease or diminish,  
 Done at a stroke, was just, (was it not?) "O!"  
 Thy great Campanile is still to finish.

OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE.



APRIL 15.

What made the secret of his past despair?  
Most imminent when he seemed most aware  
Of his own self-sufficiency; made mad  
By craving to expand the power he had,  
And not new power to be expanded?—just  
This made it; Soul on Matter being thrust,  
Joy comes when so much Soul is weakened in  
Time.

On Matter,—let the Soul's attempt sublime  
Matter beyond the scheme and so present  
By more or less that deed's accomplishment,  
And sorrow follows: Sorrow how avoid?  
Let the employer match the thing employed,  
Fit to the finite his infinity.

SORDELLO.

APRIL 16.

As in your sort of mind,  
So in your sort of search; you'll find  
What you desire, and that's to be  
A Christian.

EASTER-DAY.

And so I live, you see,  
Go through the world, try, prove, reject,  
Prefer, still struggling to effect  
My warfare; happy that I can  
Be crossed and thwarted as a man,

Not left in God's contempt apart,  
 With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,  
 Tame in earth's paddock as her prize.

EASTER-DAY.

APRIL 17.

But truth, truth, that's the gold! and all the good  
 I find in fancy is, it serves to set  
 God's inmost glint free, gold which comes up  
 rude

And rayless from the mine. All fume and fret  
 Of artistry beyond this point pursued

Brings out another sort of burnish yet  
 Always the ingot has its very own  
 Value, a sparkle struck from truth above.

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIR.

Hear the truth, and bear the truth,  
 And bring the truth to bear on all you are  
 And do, assured that good comes thence  
 Whate'er the shape good takes.

SAVIOUR OF SOCIETY.

APRIL 18.

But pain—see God's  
 Wisdom at work! Man's heart is made to judge  
 Pain deserved nowhere by the common flesh  
 Our birthright,—bad and good deserve alike  
 No pain, to human apprehension! Lust,

Greed, cruelty, injustice crave (we hold)  
 Due punishment from somebody, no doubt;  
 But ulcer in the midriff! that brings flesh  
 Triumphant from the bar whereto arraigned  
 Soul quakes with reason. In the eye of God  
 Pain may have purpose and be justified;  
 Man's sense avails to only see, in pain,  
 A hateful chance no man but would avert.  
 Or, failing, needs must pity. Thanks to God  
 And love to man,—from man take these away,  
 And what is man worth?

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

APRIL 19.

Have you found your life distasteful?  
 My life did, and does, smell sweet.  
 Was your youth of pleasure wasteful?  
 Mine I saved, and hold complete.

Do your joys with age diminish?  
 When mine fail me I'll complain.  
 Must in death your daylight finish?  
 My sun sets to rise again!

I find earth not gray but rosy;  
 Heaven not gain but fair of hue.  
 Do I stoop? I pluck a posy.  
 Do I stand and stare? All's blue.

AT THE MERMAID.

APRIL 20.

In short, God's service is established here  
 As he determines fit, and not your say,  
 And this you cannot brook. Such discontent  
 Is weak. Renounce all creatureship at once!  
 Affirm an absolute right to have and use  
 Your energies as though the rivers should say—  
 We rush to the ocean; what have we to do  
 With feeding streamlets, lingering in the vales,  
 Sleeping in lazy pools?

—————  
 PARACELsus.

I looked beyond the world for truth and beauty:  
 Sought, found, and did my duty.

—————  
 FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

APRIL 21.

If on the day when Spring's green girlishness  
 Grew nubile, and she trembled into May,  
 And on Miranda climbed to clasp the Spring  
 A-tiptoe o'er the sea, those wafts of warmth,  
 Those cloudlets scudding under the bare blue.

—————  
 RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY.

The morn is carried off in purple fire;  
 Day breaks at last! Break glory with the day.

—————  
 THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES.

APRIL 22.

Earth's mill, where we grind and wear mufflers;  
 A whip awaits shirkers and shufflers  
 Who slacken their pace, sick of lugging  
 At what don't advance for their tugging.  
 Though round goes the mill, we must still post  
 On and on as if moving the mill-post.  
 So grind away mouth-wise and pen-wise,  
 Do all that we can to make men wise!  
 And if men prefer to be foolish,  
 Ourselves have proved horse-like not mulish;  
 Sent grist, a good sackful, to hopper,  
 And worked as the Master thought proper.

PACCHIAROTTI.

APRIL 23.

Thunders on thunders, doubling and redoubling  
 Doom o'er the mountains, while a sharp white  
 fire  
 Now shone, now sheared its rusty herbage,  
 troubling  
 Hardly the fir-boles, now discharged its ire  
 Full where some pine-tree's solitary spire  
 Crashed down, defiant to the last; till—lo,  
 The motive of the malice!—all aglow,  
 Cirled with flame there yawned a sudden rift  
 I' the rock-face, and I saw a form erect  
 Front and defy the outrage, while—as checked,  
 Chidden, beside him dauntless in the drift—

Covered a heaped creature, wing and wing out-  
 spread  
 In depreciation o'er the crouching head  
 Still hungry for the feast foregone awhile.  
 O thou, of scorn's unconquerable smile,  
 Was it when this—Jove's feathered fury—slipped  
 Gore-glutted from the heart's core whence he  
 ripped—  
 This eagle-hound — neither reproach nor  
 prayer—  
 Baffled, in one more fierce attempt to tear  
 Fate's secret from thy safeguard,—was it then  
 That all these thunders rent earth, ruined air  
 To reach thee, pay thy patronage of men?  
 He thundered,—to withdraw, as beast to lair,  
 Before the triumph on thy pallid brow.  
 Gather the night again about thee now,  
 Hate on, love ever! Morn is breaking there—  
 The granite ridge pricks through the mist, turns  
 gold,  
 As wrong turns right: O laughters manifold  
 Of ocean's ripple at dull earth's despair!

PARLEYINGS.

APRIL 24.

Just as I cannot, till myself convinced,  
 Impart conviction, so, to deal forth joy  
 Adroitly, needs must I know joy myself.

Renounce joy for my fellow's sake? That's joy  
Beyond joy; but renounced for mine, not theirs?  
Why the physician called to help the sick,  
Cries, "Let me, first of all, discard my health!"  
No, son; the richness hearted in such joy  
Is in the knowing what are gifts we give,  
Not in a vain endeavor not to know!  
Therefore, desire joy and thank God for it!

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

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APRIL 25.

I saw the Power; I saw the Love, once weak,  
Resume the Power; and in this word I see,  
Too, there is recognized the spirit of both  
That moving o'er the spirit of man, unblinds  
His eye and bids him look.

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

---

Imperfection means perfection hid,  
Reserved in part, to grace the aftertime.

CLEON.

---

APRIL 26.

Lo, on a healthy brown and nameless hill  
By sparkling Asolo, in mist and chill,  
Morning just up, higher and higher runs  
A child, barefoot and rosy. See! the sun's  
On the square castle's inner-court's low wall  
Like the chime of some extinct animal

Half turned to earth and flowers; and through  
the haze

(Save where some slender patches of gray maize  
Are to be overleaped) that boy has crossed  
The whole hillside of dew and powder-frost  
Matting the balm and camomile.

Up and up goes he, singing all the while  
Some unintelligible words to beat  
The lark: God's poet, swooning at his feet.

SORDELLO.

APRIL 27.

For an edifice of cloud i' the gray and green,  
Of evening,—built about some glory of the west,  
To barricade the sun's departure,—manifest,  
He plays, pre-eminently gold, gilds vapor, crag  
and crest,

Which bend in rapt suspense above the act and  
deed.

They cluster round and keep their very own, nor  
heed

The world at watch; while he, breathlessly at the  
base

O' the castellated bulk, note momentarily the mace  
Of night fall here, fall there, bring charge with  
every blow,

Alike to sharpened shaft and broadened portico



I' the structure: heights and depths, beneath the  
    leaden stress,  
Crumble and melt and mix together, coalesce,  
Re-form, but sadder still, subdued yet more and  
    more  
By every fresh defeat, till wearied eyes need  
    pore  
No longer on the dull impoverished decadence  
Of all that pomp of pile in towering evidence  
So lately.

————— FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

APRIL 28.

Hark! 'Tis the melancholy wind astir  
Within the trees; the embers, too, are gray;  
Morn must be near. Best ope the casement;  
    see,  
The night, late strewn with clouds and flying  
    stars,  
Is blank and motionless; how peaceful sleep  
The tree-tops altogether! Like an asp,  
The wind slips whispering from bough to bough.

————— PARACELTUS.

APRIL 29.

Life means—learning to abhor  
The false, and love the truth, truth treasured  
    snatch by snatch,  
Waifs counted at their worth. And when with  
    strays they match

I' the parti-colored world—when under foul,  
 shines fair,  
 And truth, displayed i' the point, flashes forth  
 everywhere  
 I' the circle, manifest to soul, though hid from  
 sense,  
 And no obstruction more affects this con-  
 fidence,—  
 When faith is ripe for sight,—why reasonably,  
 then  
 Comes the great clearing up. Wait threescore  
 years and ten.

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

APRIL 30.

There's heaven above, and night by night  
 I look right through its gorgeous roof;  
 No suns and moons though e'er so bright  
 Avail to stop me; splendor-proof;  
 For I intend to get to God,  
 For 'tis to God I speed so fast,  
 For in God's breast, my own abode,  
 Those shoals of dazzling glory passed,  
 I lay my spirit down at last.

JOHANNES AGRICOLA IN MEDITATION.

Yet God is good; I started sure of that  
 And why dispute it now?

PARACELSUS.

## MAY.

May, sweet May, again is come, —  
May, that frees the land from gloom.  
Children, children, up and see  
All her stores of jollity!  
O'er the laughing hedgerows' side  
She hath spread her treasures wide;  
She is in the greenwood shade,  
Where the nightingale hath made  
Every branch and every tree  
Ring with her sweet melody;  
Hill and dale are May's own treasures,  
Youth, rejoice in sportive measures;  
Sing ye! join the chorus gay!  
Hail this merry, merry May!

Up, then, children, we will go  
Where the blooming roses grow;  
In a joyful company  
We the bursting flowers will see;  
Up! your festal dress prepare!  
Where gay hearts are meeting, there  
May hath pleasures most inviting,  
Hearts and sights and ear delighting;  
Listen to the birds' sweet song,  
Hark! how soft it floats along!  
Courtly dames our pleasures share,  
Never saw I May so fair;  
Therefore dancing will we go;  
Youths, rejoice, the flowerets blow;  
Sing ye! join the chorus gay!  
Hail this merry, merry May!

A MINNESINGER.

## MAY 1.

He leans into a living glory-bath  
 Of air and light, where seems to float and move  
 The wooded watered country, hills and dale  
 And steel-bright thread of stream, a-smoke with  
     mist,  
 A-sparkle with May morning, diamond drift  
 O' the sun-tracked dew.

INN ALBUM.

My own month came;  
 'Twas a sunrise of blossoming and May.

SORDELLO.

## MAY 2.

Such a starved bank of moss  
     Till, that May-morn,  
 Blue ran the flash across:  
     Violets were born!

Sky—what a scowl of cloud  
     Till, near and far,  
 Ray on ray split the shroud:  
     Splendid, a star!

World—how it walled about  
     Life with disgrace  
 Till God's own smile came out:  
     That was thy face!

APPARITIONS.

---

MAY 3.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've Summer  
all at once.

In a day he heaps complete with a few strong  
April suns.

'Mid the sharp, short emerald wheat, scarce  
risen three fingers well,

The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its  
great red bell

Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the chil-  
dren to pick and sell.

UP AT A VILLA.

---

MAY 4.

A moment after, and hands unseen

Were hanging the night around us fast.

But we knew that a bar was broken between

Life and life; we were mixed at last.

In spite of the mortal screen.

The forests had done it; there they stood—

We caught for a second the powers at play.

They had mingled us so, for once and for good,

Their work was done—we might go or stay,

They relapsed to their ancient mood.

BY THE FIRESIDE.

---

MAY 5.

Thus the Mayne glideth

Where my Love abideth.

---

Sleep's no softer; it proceeds  
On through lawns, on through meads,  
On and on, whate'er befall,  
Meandering and musical,  
Though the sluggard pasturage  
Bears not on its shaven ledge  
Aught but needs and waving grasses  
To view the river as it passes,  
Save here and there a scanty patch  
Of primrose too faint to catch  
A weary bee.

And scarce it pushes  
Its gentle way through struggling rushes  
Where the glossy kingfisher  
Flutters when noon-heats are near,  
Glad the shelving banks to shun,  
Red and steaming in the sun,  
Where the shrew mouse with pale throat  
Burrows, and the speckled stoat;  
Where the quick sandpipers flit  
In and out the marl and grit  
That seem to breed them, brown as they;  
Naught disturbs its quiet way,  
Save some lazy stork that springs,  
Trailing it with legs and wings,  
When the sly fox from the hills  
Rouses, creep he ne'er so still.

PARACELSUS.

---

MAY 6.

The creature and Creator stand  
Rightly related so. Consider well!  
Were knowledge all thy faculty, then God  
Must be ignored; love gains him by first leap.  
Frankly accept the creatureship; ask good  
To love for: press bold to the tether's end  
Allotted to this life's intelligence!

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

---

God's finger makes distinction all so fine,  
We would confound; the lesser has its use,  
Which, when it apes the greater, is foregone.

LURIA.

---

MAY 7.

I only knew one poet in my life:  
And this, or something like it, was his way,  
You saw him go up and down Valladolid,  
A man of mark, to know next time you saw.  
His very serviceable suit of black  
Was courtly once and conscientious still,  
And many might have worn it, though none did.  
The cloak, that somewhat shone and showed the  
threads,  
Had purpose, and the ruff, significance.

HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY.

MAY 8.

How quickly night comes! Lo, already 'tis the  
 land,  
 Turns sea-like: overcrept by gray, the plains ex-  
 pand,  
 Assume significance; while ocean dwindles,  
 shrinks  
 Into a pettier bound: its flash and plaint, me-  
 thinks,  
 Six steps away, how both retire, as if their part  
 Were played, another face were free to prove  
 her art,  
 Protagonist in turn! Are you unterrified?  
 All false, all fleeting, too! And nowhere things  
 abide,  
 And everywhere we strain that things should  
 stay—the one  
 Truth, that ourselves are true!

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

MAY 9.

What hand and brain went ever paired?  
 What heart alike conceived and dared?  
 What act proved all its thought had been?  
 What will but felt the fleshly screen?

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER.



You never know what life means, till you die;  
 Ever throughout life, 'tis death that makes life  
     live,  
 Gives it whatever the significance.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

MAY 10.

Poor vaunt of life, indeed,  
 Were man but formed to feed  
 On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:  
 Such feasting ended, then  
 As sure an end to men;  
 Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the  
     man-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied  
 To that which doth provide  
 And not partake, effect and not receive!  
 A spark disturbs our clod;  
 Nearer we hold of God  
 Who gives, than of His tribe that take, I must  
     believe.

RABBI BEN EZRA.

MAY 11.

Force, guile, were  
     Arms which earned  
 My praise, not blame at all; for we must learn  
     to live,

Case-hardened at all points, not bare and sensitive,  
 But plated for defence, nay, furnished for attack,  
 With spikes at the due place, that neither front  
 nor back  
 May suffer in that squeeze with nature, we find—  
 life.  
 Are we not here to learn the good of peace  
 through strife  
 Of love through hate, and reach knowledge by  
 ignorance?  
 Why, there are helps thereto, which late we eyed  
 askance,  
 And nicknamed unaware! Just so, a sword we  
 call  
 Superfluous, and cry out against, at festival;  
 Wear it in time of war, its clink and clatter  
 grate  
 O' the ear to purpose then!

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

MAY 12.

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!  
 Sit and watch by her side an hour.  
 That is her book-shelf, this her bed;  
 She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,  
 Beginning to die, too, in the glass.  
 Little has yet been changed, I think—

The shutters are shut, no light may pass  
 Save two long rays thro' the hinge's chink.

. . . . .

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while;  
 My heart seemed full as it could hold—  
 There was place and to spare for the frank young  
 smile  
 And the red young mouth and the hair's  
 young gold.  
 So, hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep—  
 See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand.  
 There, that is our secret! Go to sleep;  
 You will wake, and remember, and under-  
 stand.

EVELYN HOPE.

MAY 13.

On the great elm-tree in the open, posed  
 Placidly full in front, smooth bole, broad branch  
 And leafage, one green plenitude of May.  
 O you exceeding beauty, bosomful  
 Of lights and shades, murmurs and silences,  
 Sun-warmth, dew-coolness,—squirrel, bee and  
 bird,  
 High, higher, highest; till the blue porcelains  
 Leave and earth, there's nothing better till next  
 step,  
 Heavenward!

THE INN ALBUM.

MAY 14.

I had a noble purpose, and the strength  
 To compass it; but I have stopped half way,  
 And wrongly given the first fruits of my toil  
 To objects little worthy of the gift.  
 Why linger 'round them still? Why clench my  
 fault?

Why seek for consolation in defeat,  
 In vain endeavors to derive a beauty  
 From ugliness? Why seek to make the most  
 Of what no power can change, nor strive instead  
 With mighty effort to redeem the past  
 And, gathering up the treasures thus cast down,  
 To hold a steadfast course, till I arrive  
 At their fit destination and my own?

PARACELSUS.

MAY 15.

Never the time and the place,  
 And the loved ones all together!  
 This path—how soft to pace!  
 This May—what magic weather!  
 Where is the loved one's face?  
 In a dream that loved one's face meets mine,  
 But the house is narrow, the place is black,  
 Where, outside, rain and wind combine  
 With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak,  
 With a hostile eye at my flushing cheek,

With a malice that makes each word, each  
sign!

O enemy sly and serpentine,  
Uncoil thee from the waking man!

Do I hold the Past  
Thus firm and fast,

Yet doubt if the Future hold I can?  
This path so soft to pace shall lead  
Through the magic of May to herself indeed!  
Or narrow if needs the house must be,  
Outside are the storms and strangers; we—  
Oh, close, safe, warm, sleep I and she,  
—I and she!

NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE.

---

MAY 16.

But morning's laugh sets all the crags alight  
Above the baffled tempest; tree and tree  
Stir themselves from the stupor of the night,  
And every strangled branch resumes its right  
To breathe, shakes loose dark's clinging dregs,  
waves free

In dripping glory. Prone the runnels plunge,  
While earth, distent with moisture like a sponge,  
Smokes up, and leaves each plant its gem to see,  
Each grass-blade's glory glitter.

PARLEYINGS.

MAY 17.

Therefore to whom turn I but thee, the ineffable  
 Name?  
 Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made  
 with hands!  
 What, have fear of change from thee who art  
 ever the same?  
 Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy  
 power expands?  
 There shall never be one lost good! What was,  
 shall live as before;  
 The will is null, is naught, is silence implying  
 sound;  
 What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so  
 much good more;  
 On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a  
 perfect round.

ABT VOGLER.

MAY 18.

I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ,  
 Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee  
 All questions in the earth and out of it,  
 And has so far advanced thee to be wise.

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

God smiles as he has always smiled;  
 Ere suns and moon could wax or wane,

Ere stars were thundergirt, or piled  
The heavens, God thought on me his child;  
Ordained a life for me, arrayed  
Its circumstances every one  
To the minutest.

JOHANNES AGRICOLA IN MEDITATION.

---

MAY 19.

Here the blot is blanched  
By God's gift of a purity of soul  
That would not take pollution, ermine-like  
Armed from dishonor by its own soft snow.  
Such was this gift of God who showed for once  
How he would have the world go white.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

First of the first,  
Such I pronounce Pompilia, then as now  
Perfect in whiteness.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

MAY 20.

For the air is still, and the water still,  
When the blue breast of the dipping coot  
Dives under, and all is mute.  
So at the last shall come old age,  
Decrepit as befits that stage;  
How else wouldst thou retire apart

F.L. of C.

With hoarded memories of the heart,  
And gather all to the very least  
Of the fragments of life's earlier feast,  
Let fall through eagerness to find  
The crowning dainties yet behind?  
Ponder on the entire past  
Laid together thus at last,  
When the twilight helps to fuse  
The first fresh with the faded hues,  
And the outline of the whole,  
As round eve's shades their framework roll,  
Grandly fronts for once thy soul.  
And then as, 'mid the dark, a gleam  
Of yet another morning breaks,  
And like the hand which ends a dream,  
Death, with the might of his sunbeam,  
Touches the flesh and the soul awakes.

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS.

MAY 21.

I paused again; a change was coming—came;  
I was no more a boy, the past was breaking  
Before the future, and like fever worked.  
I thought on my new self, and all my powers  
Burst out. I dreamed not of restraint, but  
gazed  
On all things; schemes and systems went and  
came,



And I was proud (being vainest of the weak)  
In wandering o'er thoughts to seek some one  
To be my prize, as if you wandered o'er  
The White Way for a star.

PAULINE.

And can it be,  
Dear Aureole, you have then found out at last  
That worldly things are utter vanity?

PARACELSUS.

---

MAY 22.

Honor is a gift of God to man  
Precious beyond compare; which natural sense  
Of human rectitude and purity,—  
Which white, man's soul is born with,—brooks  
no touch.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

And they admired; nobility of soul  
Was self-impelled to reverence, they saw;  
The best men ever prove the wisest, too;  
Something instinctive guides them still aright.

BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE.

---

MAY 23.

Was it, then, by rarest chance, there fell  
Disguise from Nature, so that Truth remained  
Naked, and whoso saw for once could tell

Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,  
 Its soft meandering Spanish name;  
 What a name! Was it love or praise?  
 Speech half-asleep or song half-awake?  
 I must learn Spanish, one of these days,  
 Only for that slow, sweet name's sake.

GARDEN FANCIES.

MAY 26.

A poet never dreams;  
 We prose folk always do; we miss the proper  
 duct  
 For thoughts on things unseen, which stagnate  
 and obstruct  
 The system, therefore; mind, sound in a body  
 sane,  
 Keep thoughts apart from facts, and to one flow-  
 ing vein  
 Confines its sense of that which is not, but might  
 be,  
 And leaves the rest alone. What ghosts do  
 poets see?  
 What demons fear? What man or things mis-  
 apprehend?  
 Unchecked, the channel's flush, the fancy's free  
 to spend  
 In special self aright in manner, time and place.

Never believe that who create the busy race  
 O' the brain, bring poetry to birth, such act per-  
 formed,  
 Feel trouble then, the same, such residue as  
 warmed  
 My prosy blood, this morn,—intrusive fancies,  
 meant  
 For outbreaks and escape by quite another vent!  
 Whence follows that, asleep, my dreamings oft  
 exceed  
 The bound. But you shall hear.

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

MAY 27.

To me, that story—ay, that Life and Death  
 Of which I wrote "it was"—to me, it is;  
 —Is, here and now; I apprehend naught else.  
 Is not God now i' the world his power first  
 made?  
 Is not his love at issue still with sin,  
 Visibly when a wrong is done on earth?  
 Love, wrong and pain, what see I else around?  
 Yea, and the Resurrection and Uprise  
 To the right hand of the throne—what is it  
 beside,  
 When such truth, breaking bounds, o'erfloods  
 my soul,  
 And, as I saw the sin and death, even so

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To the right hand of the throne—what is it  
beside,  
When such truth, breaking bounds, o'erfloods  
my soul,  
And, as I saw the sin and death, even so

See I the need yet transciency of both,  
The good and glory consummated thence?

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

---

MAY 28.

For thence—a paradox  
Which comforts while it mocks—  
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:  
What I aspired to be,  
And was not, comforts me!  
A brute I might have been, but would not sink  
i' the scale.

What is he but a brute  
Whose flesh hath soul to suit,  
Where spirit works lest arms and legs want  
play?  
To man, propose this test—  
Thy body at its best,  
How far can that project thy soul on its lone  
way?

RABBI BEN EZRA.

---

MAY 29.

Man might live at first  
The animal life; but is there nothing more?  
In due time, let him critically learn

How he lives, and, the more light he gets to  
know

Of his own life's adaptabilities,  
The more joy-giving will his life become.  
Thus man who hath this quality is best.

CLEON.

---

Live and learn,  
Not first learn, and then live, is our concern.

PARLEYINGS.

---

MAY 30.

Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam, caught  
With a single splash from my ewer!  
You that would mock the best pursuer,  
Was my basin over-deep?  
One splash of water ruins your sleep,  
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits,  
Wheeling and counter-wheeling,  
Reeling, broken beyond healing;  
Now grow together on the ceiling!  
That will task your wits;  
Whoever it was quenched fire first, hope to see  
Morsel after morsel flee  
As merrily, as giddily . . .  
Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on,  
Where settles by degrees the radiant cripple?  
Oh, is it surely blown, my martigan?

PIPPA PASSES.

MAY 31.

Too much

Have I enjoyed these fifteen years of mine,  
To leave myself excuse for longer life;  
Was not life pressed down, running o'er with  
joy,  
That I might finish with it ere my fellows  
Who, sparelier feasted, make a longer stay?  
I was put at the board-head, helped to all  
At first; I rise up happy and content.  
God must be glad one loves his world so much.  
I can give news of earth to all the dead  
Who ask me:—last year's sunsets, and great  
stars  
Which had a right to come first and see ebb  
The crimson wave that drifts the sun away—  
These crescent moons with notched and burning  
rims  
That strengthened into sharp fire, and there  
stood,  
Impatient of the azure—and that day  
In March, a double rainbow stopped the storm—  
May's warm slow yellow moonlit summer  
nights—  
Gone are they, but I have them in my soul!

PIPPA PASSES.



JUNE.

Month of the perfect love,  
Month of the perfect leaf—  
The mellow-mourning dove  
Thine only note of grief—  
Oh, let me hide within thy shade a sorrow past relief!

Thou, unto whose employ  
All Nature's arts belong—  
Fragrance and warmth and joy—  
Admit me to thy throng.  
Thou canst not dull the pang, but oh! tune every chord  
to song!

WALTER BROOKE.

## JUNE 1.

Day!  
 Faster and more fast,  
 O'er night's brim, day boils at last;  
 Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cap's brim  
 Where spurting and suppressed it lay,  
 For not a froth-flake touched the rim  
 Of yonder gap in the solid gray,  
 Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;  
 But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,  
 Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,  
 Rose, reddened, and its seething breast  
 Flickered in bound, grew gold, then overflowed  
 the world!

PIPPA PASSES.

## JUNE 2.

He climbed with (June at deep) some close  
 ravine  
 'Mid clatter of its million pebbles' sheen,  
 Over which, singing soft, the runnel slipped  
 Elate with rain; into whose streamlet dipped  
 He foot, yet trod, you thought, with unwet  
 sock—  
 Though really on the stubs of living rock  
 Ages ago it crenelled; voices for roof,  
 Lindens for wall; before him, age aloof,  
 Flittered in the coolsome azure damsel-fly,  
 Born of the shimmering quiet, there to die,

Emerging whence, Apollo still, he spied  
Mighty descents of forests; multiplied  
Tuft on tuft, here, the frolic myrtle-trees,  
There gendered the grave maple stocks at ease,  
And proud of its observer, straight the wood  
Tried old surprises on him; black it stood,  
A sudden barrier ('twas a cloud passed o'er)  
So dead and dense, the tiniest brute no more  
Must pass; yet presently (the cloud dispatched)  
Each clump, behold, was glistening detached  
A shrub, oak-boles shrunk into ilex-stems!

SORDELLO.

JUNE 3.

I say that man was made to grow, not stop,  
What help, he needed once, and needs no more,  
Having grown but an inch by, is withdrawn;  
For he hath new needs, and new helps to these,  
This imports solely, man should mount on each  
New height in view; the help whereby he  
mounts,  
The ladder-rung his foot has left, may fall,  
Since all things suffer change save God the  
Truth.

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

God grants to each a sphere to be its world,  
Appointed with the various objects needed  
To satisfy its own peculiar want. PARACELSUS.

JUNE 4.

Mark the flying orb!  
 Think'st the halo, painted still afresh  
 At each new cloud-fleece pierced and passaged  
     through,  
 This was and is and will be evermore  
 Colored in permanence? The glory swims  
 Guiding the glory giver, swallowed straight  
 By night's abysmal gloom, unglorified  
 Behind as erst before the advancer: gloom?  
 Faced by the onward-forming, see, succeeds  
 From the abandoned heaven a next surprise,  
 And where's the gloom now? silver-smitten,  
     straight,  
 One glow and variegation! So, with me  
 Who move and make,—myself,—the black the  
     white,  
 The good, the bad, of life's environment.

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

JUNE 5.

    Mere decay  
 Produces richer life; and day by day  
 New pollen on the lily-petal grows  
 And still more labyrinthine buds the rose.

SORDELLO.

God told him it was June; and he knew well,  
Without such telling, harebells grew in June,  
And all that kings could ever give or take  
Would not be precious as those blooms to him.

PARACELSUS.

---

JUNE 6.

Oh, those mountains, their infinite movement!  
Still moving with you;  
For, ever some new head and heart of them  
Thrust into view  
To observe the intruder; you see it  
If quickly you turn  
And, before they escape you surprise them;  
They grudge you should learn  
How the soft plains they look on, lean over  
And lose (they pretend)  
Cower beneath them.

THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY.

---

JUNE 7.

Man's cause—what other can we have at heart?  
Whence follows that the necessary part  
High o'er man's head we play,—and freelier  
breathe.  
Just that the multitude which gasps beneath  
May reach the level where unstified stand  
Ourselves at vantage to put forth a hand,

Assist the prostrate public. 'Tis by right  
Merely of such pretence, we reach the height  
Where storms abound, to brave—nay, count  
    their stress,  
Though all too well aware—of pomp the less,  
Of peace the more! But who are we, to spurn,  
For peace's sake, duty's pointing? Up, then,—  
    earn  
Albeit no prize we may but martyrdom!  
Now, such fit height to launch salvation from,  
How get and gain? Since help must needs be  
    craved  
By would-be saviours of the else-unsaved,  
How coax them to co-operate, lend a lift,  
Kneel down and let us mount?

PARLEYINGS.

---

JUNE 8.

Is it for nothing we grow old and weak,  
We whom God loves? When pain ends, gain  
    ends, too.

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

---

The good we hoped to gain has failed us—well,  
We do not see the ending; and the boon  
May wait us down the ages—who can tell?  
And bless us amply soon.

JUNE 9.

'Twas in my plan to look on real life,  
The life all new to me; my theories  
Were firm, so them I left to look and learn  
Mankind, its cares, hopes, fears, its woes and  
joys;

And, as I pondered on their ways, I sought  
How best life's end might be attained—an end  
Comprising every joy. I deeply mused.

PAULINE.

---

God's gift was that man should conceive of truth  
And yearn to gain it, catching at mistake.

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

---

JUNE 10.

O world as God has made it, all is beauty,  
And knowing this is love, and love is duty.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

---

Ask thy lone soul what laws are plain to thee,—  
Thee and no other,—stand or fall by them!  
This is the part for thee.

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

---

JUNE 11.

This I say of me, but think of you, Love!  
This to you—yourself my moon of poets!

Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder,  
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know.  
There, in turn I stand with them and praise  
you—

Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.  
But the best is when I glide from out them,  
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,  
Come out on the other side, the novel  
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,  
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

ONE WORD MORE.

JUNE 12.

Leave help to God as I am forced to do!  
There is no other help, or we should craze,  
Seeing such evil with no human care.  
Reflect that God who makes the storm desist,  
Can make an angry violent heart subside.  
Why should we venture teach him governance?

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

Be not extravagant in grief no less!  
Bear it, by augury of better things!

BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE.

JUNE 13.

But let the sun shine! Wherefore repine?  
—With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,



Down the grass path gray with dew,  
Under the pine-wood blind with boughs.  
Where the swallow never flew  
Nor yet cicala dared carouse. PIPPA PASSES.

Ah, see! The sun breaks o'er Calvinm:  
He strikes the great gloom  
And flutters it o'er the mount's summit  
In airy gold fume.  
THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY.

JUNE 14.

No; Man's the prerogative—knowledge once  
gained—  
To ignore,—find new knowledge to press for, to  
swerve  
In pursuit of, no, not for a moment: attained—  
Why onward through ignorance! Dare and de-  
serve!  
As still to its asympote speeds the curve,  
So approximates Man—there, who, reachable  
not,  
Hast formed him to yearningly follow thy whole  
Sole and single omniscience!  
PARLEYINGS.

I thirst for truth,  
But shall not drink it till I reach the source.  
THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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 JUNE 15.

I affirm and reaffirm it therefore; only make as  
 plain  
 As that man now lives, that after dying, man will  
 live again,—  
 Make as plain the absence, also, of a law to con-  
 travene  
 Voluntary passage from this life to that by change  
 of scene,—  
 And I bid him—at suspicion of first cloud  
 athwart his sky,  
 Flower's departure, frost's arrival—never hesi-  
 tate, but die!

LA SAISIAZ.

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 JUNE 16.

Oh, the old wall here! How could I pass  
 Life in a long midsummer day,  
 My feet confined to a plot of grass,  
 My eyes from a wall not once away!

And lush and lithe do the creepers clothe  
 Yon wall I watch, with a wealth of green;  
 Its bald red bricks draped, nothing loth,  
 In lappets of tangle they laugh between.

Now, what is it makes pulsate the robe?  
 Why tremble the sprays? What life o'erbrims

The body,—the house, no eye can probe—  
Divined as, beneath a robe, the limbs?

And there again! But my heart may guess  
Who tripped behind; and she sang perhaps;  
So, the old wall throbbled, and its life's excess  
Died out and away in the leafy wraps!

Wall upon wall are between us: life  
And song should away from heart to heart!  
I—prison-bird, with a ruddy strife  
At breast, and a lip whence storm-notes  
start—

Hold on, hope hard, in the subtle thing  
That's spirit: Though cloistered fast, soar free;  
Account as wood, brick, stone, this ring  
Of the rueful neighbors, and—forth to thee!

PACCHIAROTTI (PROLOGUE).

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JUNE 17.

It was roses, roses, all the way,  
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad  
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,  
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,  
A year ago on this very day!

The air broke into a mist with bells,  
The old walls rocked with the crowds and  
cries.

Had I said, "Good folks, mere noise repels—

But give me your sun from yonder skies!"

They had answered, "And afterward, what  
else?"

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun,  
To give it my loving friends to keep.  
Naught man could do, have I left undone,  
And you see my harvest, what I reap  
This very day, now a year is run.

There's nobody on the house-tops now—  
Just a palsied few at the windows set—  
For the best of the sight is, all allow,  
At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,  
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,  
A rope cuts both my wrists behind,  
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,  
For they fling whosoever has a mind,  
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Thus I entered Brescia, and thus I go?

In such triumphs, people have dropped down  
dead.

“Thou, paid by the World,—what dost thou owe  
 Me?” God might have questioned; but now  
 instead  
 ’Tis God shall requite! I am safer so.

THE PATRIOT.

JUNE 18.

There’s a fancy some lean to and others hate—  
 That, when this life is ended, begins  
 New work for the soul in another state,  
 Where it strives and gets weary, loses and  
 wins;  
 Where the strong and the weak, this world’s  
 congeries,  
 Repeat in large what they practised in small,  
 Through life after life in unlimited series;  
 Only the scale’s to be changed, that’s all.

Yet I hardly know. When a soul has seen  
 By the means of Evil that Good is best,  
 And, through earth and its noise, what is  
 heaven’s serene,—  
 When our faith in the same has stood the  
 test—  
 Why, the child grown man, you burn the rod,  
 The uses of labor are surely done,  
 There remaineth a rest for the people of God;  
 And I have had troubles enough for one.

OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE.

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JUNE 19.

God holds appraising in his hollow palm,  
 Not act grown great thence on the world below,  
 Leafage and branchage, vulgar eyes admire.  
 Therefore I stand on my integrity,  
 Nor fear at all.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

No: as with body so deals law with soul,  
 That's stung to strength through weakness,  
       strives for good  
 Through evil—earth its race-ground, Heaven its  
       goal,  
 Presumably.

PARLEYINGS.

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JUNE 20.

How dared I let expand the force  
 Within me, till some out-soul, whose resource  
 It grew for, should direct it? Every law  
 Of life, its every fitness, every flaw,  
 Must One determine whose corporeal shape  
 Would be no other than the prime escape  
 And revelation to me of a Will  
 Orb-like o'ershrouded, and inscrutable  
 Above, save at the point which, I should know,  
 Shone that myself, my powers, might overflow

So far, so much; as now it signified  
Which earthly shape it henceforth chose my  
    guide,  
Whose mortal lip selected to declare  
Its oracles, what fleshly garb would wear  
—The first of intimations, whom to love;  
The next how to love him.

SORDELLO.

JUNE 21.

Overhead the tree-tops meet,  
Flowers and grass spring 'neath my feet;  
There was naught above me, naught below;  
My childhood had not learned to know;  
For what are the voices of birds  
—Aye, and of beasts,—but words, our words,  
Only so much more sweet?  
The knowledge of that with my life began.  
But I had so near made out the sun,  
And counted your stars, the seven and one,  
Like the fingers of my hand;  
Nay, I could all but understand  
Wherefore through heaven the white moon  
    ranges,  
And just when out of her soft fifty changes  
No unfamiliar face might overlook me—  
Suddenly God took me.

PIPPA PASSES.

JUNE 22.

Wanting is—what?  
 Summer redundant,  
 Blueness abundant,  
 —Where is the blot?

Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,  
 —Framework which waits for a painter to frame;  
 What of the leafage, what of the flower?  
 Roses embowering with naught they embower!  
 Come then, complete incompleteness, O come,  
 Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer!  
 Breathe but a breath  
 Rose-beauty above,  
 And all that was death  
 Grows life, grows love,  
 Grows love!

WANTING IS — WHAT?

JUNE 23.

Noon is the conqueror,—not a spray, nor leaf,  
 Nor herb, nor blossom, but has rendered up  
 Its morning dew; the valley seemed one cup  
 Of cloud-smoke, but the vapor's reign was brief;  
 Sun-smitten, see, it hangs—the filmy haze—  
 Gray-garmenting the herbless mountain-side,  
 To soothe the day's sharp glare: while far and  
 wide  
 Above unclouded burns the sky, one blaze



With fierce immitigable blue, no bird  
 Ventures to spot by passage. E'en of peaks  
 Which still presume there, plain each pale point  
 speaks

In wan transparency of waste incurred  
 By over-daring: far from me be such!  
 Deep in the hollow, rather where combine  
 Tree, shrub and briar to roof with shade and  
 cool

The remnant of some lily-strangled pool,  
 Edged 'round with mossy fringing soft and fine.  
 Smooth lie the bottom slabs, and overhead  
 Watch elder, bramble, rose and service-tree  
 And one beneficent rich barberry  
 Jewelled all over with fruit-pendants red.

—————  
 PARLEYINGS.

JUNE 24.

Youth is the only time  
 To think and decide on a great cause:  
 Manhood with action follows; but 'tis dreary  
 To have to alter our whole life in age—  
 The time past, the strength gone!

—————  
 STRAFFORD.

Ever ahead i' the march,  
 Quick at the by-road and the cut-across,  
 She went to the best adviser, God—

—————  
 THE RING AND THE BOOK.

JUNE 25.

No creature's made so mean  
 But that, some way, it boasts, could we investi-  
 gate  
 Its supreme worth: fulfils, by ordinance of fate,  
 Its momentary task, gets glory all its own,  
 Tastes triumph in the world, pre-eminent, alone.  
 Where is the single grain of sand, 'mid millions  
 heaped  
 Confusedly on the beach, but, did we know, has  
 leaped  
 Or will leap, would we wait, i' the century, some  
 once,  
 To the very throne of things?—earth's highest  
 for the nonce,  
 When sunshine shall impinge on just that grain's  
 facette  
 Which fronts him fullest, first, returns his ray  
 with jet  
 Of promptest praise, thanks God in creation's  
 name!

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

JUNE 26.

A people is but the attempt of many  
 To rise to the complete life of one;  
 And those who live as models for the mass  
 Are simply of more value than they all.  
 Such men are you, and such a time as this,

What your sole fate concerns a nation more  
Than much apparent failure: That to prove  
Your rectitude, and duly crown the same,  
Imports us far today's event,  
A battle's loss or gain: man's mass remains,—  
Keep but God's model safe, new men will rise  
To take its mould, and other days to prove  
How great a good was Luria's glory.

LURIA.

JUNE 27.

Rafael made a century of sonnets,  
Made and wrote them in a certain volume  
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil  
Else he only used to draw Madonnas;  
These, the world might view—but one, the  
volume.

Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs  
you.

Did she live and love it all her lifetime?  
Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,  
Die, and let it drop beside her pillow,  
Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,  
Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving—  
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,  
Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

You and I would rather read that volume,  
(Taken to his beating bosom by it)

Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,  
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas—  
Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,  
Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre—  
Seen by us and all the world in circle.

You and I will never read that volume.  
Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple  
Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.  
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna  
Cried, and the world cried, too, "Ours, the  
treasure!"  
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

ONE WORD MORE.

JUNE 28.

O lover of my life, O soldier-saint,  
No work begun shall ever pause for death!  
Love will be helpful to me more and more  
I' the coming course, the new path I must  
tread—  
My weak hand in thy strong hand, strong for  
that!  
Tell him, that if I seem without him now,  
That's the world's insight! Oh, he understands!  
He is at Civita—do I once doubt  
The world again is holding us apart?  
He had been here, displayed in my behalf

The broad brow that reverberates the truth,  
And flashed the word God gave him back to  
man!

I know where the free soul is flown! My fate  
Will have been hard for even him to bear:  
Let it confirm him in the trust of God,  
Showing how holily he dared the deed!  
And, for the rest,—say, from the deed, no touch  
Of harm came, but all good, all happiness,  
Not one fleck of failure!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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JUNE 29.

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,  
A mite of my twelve-hours treasure,  
The last of thy gazes or glances,  
(Be they grant thou art bound to or gift above  
measure)  
One of thy choice or one of thy chances,  
(Be thy tasks God imposed thee or freaks at thy  
pleasure)  
—My Day, if I squander such labor or leisure  
Then shall shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

PIPPA PASSES.

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JUNE 30.

All that I know  
Of a certain star  
Is, it can throw

(Like the angled spar)  
Now a dart of red,  
Now a dart of blue;  
Till my friends have said  
They would fain see, too,  
My star that dartles the red and the blue!  
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs  
furled;  
They must solace themselves with the Saturn  
above it.  
What matter to me if their star is a world?  
Mine has opened its soul to me, therefore I  
love it.

MY STAR,

## JULY.

It's O my heart, my heart,  
To be out in the sun and sing —  
To sing and shout in the fields about,  
In the balm and the blossoming!

Sing loud, O bird in the tree;  
O bird, sing loud in the sky,  
And honey-bee, blacken the clover-beds —  
There are none so glad as I.

The leaves laugh low in the wind,  
Laugh low, with the wind at play;  
And the odorous call of flowers call  
Entices my soul away!

For O but the world is fair, is fair —  
And O but the world is sweet!  
I will out in the gold of the blossoming mould,  
And sit at the Master's feet.

And the love that my heart would speak,  
I will fold in the lily's rim,  
That th' lips of the blossom, more pure and meek,  
May offer it up to Him.

Then sing in the hedgerow green, O thrush,  
O skylark, sing in the blue;  
Sing loud, sing clear, that the King may hear,  
And my soul shall sing with you!

INA COOLBRITH.

JULY 1.

Linden—flower-time—long  
 Her eyes were on the ground; 'tis July, strong  
 Now; and because white dust clouds overwhelm  
 The woodside, here or by the village elm  
 That holds the morn, she meets you, somewhat  
 pale,  
 But letting you lift up her coarse flax veil  
 And whisper (the damp little hand in yours)  
 Of love, heart's love, your heart's love that en-  
 dures  
 Till death. \_\_\_\_\_

SORDELLO.

As German Boehme never cared for plants  
 Until it happed, a-walking in the fields,  
 He noticed all at once that plants could speak,  
 Nay, turned with loosened tongue to talk with  
 him.

That day the daisy had an eye indeed—  
 Colloquized with the cowslip on such themes!  
 We find them extant yet in Jacob's prose.

\_\_\_\_\_ MEN AND WOMEN.

JULY 2.

However, you're my man, you've seen the world  
 —The beauty and the wonder and the power,  
 The shapes of things, their colors, lights and  
 shades,  
 Changes, surprises,—and God made it all!

FRA LIPPO LIPPI.



We find great things are made of little things,  
And little things go lessening till at last  
Comes God behind them.

MR. SLUDGE, "THE MEDIUM."

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JULY 3.

For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,  
And hope and fear,—believe the aged friend,—  
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,  
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

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Heart to heart  
And lips to lips! Yet once more, ere we part,  
Clasp me, and make me thine, as mine thou art!

---

IN A GONDOLA.

JULY 4.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth  
    South and North,  
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high  
    As the sky,  
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—  
    Gold, of course.  
Oh, heart! oh, blood that freezes, blood that  
    burns!  
    Earth's returns  
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!  
    Shut them in

With their triumphs and their glories and the  
rest!

Love is best.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS.

JULY 5.

Why should despair be? since, distinct above  
Man's wickedness and folly, flies the wind  
And floats the cloud, free transport for our soul  
Out of its fleshly durance dim and low,—  
Since disembodied soul anticipates

(Thought-born as now, in rapturous unrestraint)  
Above all crowding, crystal silentness,  
Above all noise, a silver solitude:—  
Surely, where thought so bears the soul, soul in  
time

May permanently bide, there work in hope once  
more—

O nothing doubt, Philemon! Greed and strife,  
Hatred and cark and care, what place have they  
In yon blue liberty of heaven?

How the sea helps! How rose-smit earth will  
rise

Breast-high theme, some bright morning, and  
be Rhodes!

Heaven, earth and sea, my warrant—in their  
name,

Believe—o'er falsehood, truth is surely sphered,

O'er ugliness beams beauty, o'er this world  
Extends that realm where, "as the wise assert,"  
Philemon, thou shalt see Euripides  
Clearer than mortal sense preserved the soul.

ARISTOPHANE'S APOLOGY.

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JULY 6.

'Tis so long since I have smiled! Alas such  
smiles are born  
Alone of hearts like yours, or herdsmen's souls  
Of ancient time, whose eyes, calm as their  
flocks,  
Saw in the stars mere garishy of heaven,  
And in the earth a stage for altars only.

PARACELBUS.

---

My love of England—how her name, a word  
Of hers in a strange tongue makes my heart  
beat!

PAULINE.

---

JULY 7.

So, force is sorrow, and each sorrow force;  
What then? since Swiftmess gives the char-  
ioteer  
The palm, his hope be in the horse  
Whose neck God clothed with thunder, not  
the star

Sluggish and safe! Yoke Hatred, Crime, Remorse,

Despair; but ever 'mid the whirling fear,  
Let, through the tumult, break the poet's face,  
Radiant, assured his wild slaves win the race!

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC.

JULY 8.

God who registers the cup  
Of mere cold water, for His sake  
To a disciple rendered up,  
Disdains not His own thirst to slake  
At the poorest love was ever offered:  
And because it was my heart I proffered,  
With true love trembling at the brim,  
He suffers me to follow Him  
Forever, my own way,—dispensed  
From seeking to be influenced  
By all the less immediate ways  
That earth, in worships manifold,  
Adopts to reach, by prayer and praise,  
The garment's hem, which, lo, I hold!

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

JULY 9.

So, I create a world for these my shapes  
Fit to sustain their beauty and their strength!  
And, at the word, I would contrive and paint

Woods, valleys, rocks and plains, dells, sands  
and wastes,

Lakes which, when morn breaks on their quiver-  
ing bed,

Blaze like a wyvern flying 'round the sun,  
And ocean isles so small, the dog-fish tracking  
A dead whale, who should find them, would  
swim thrice

Around them, and fare onward—all to hold  
The offspring of my bosom. Nor these alone:  
Bronze labyrinth, palace, pyramid and crypt,  
Baths, galleries, courts, temples and terraces,  
Marts, theatres, and wharfs—all filled with men,  
Men everywhere! And this performed in turn,  
When those who looked on, pined to hear the  
hopes

And fears and hates and loves which moved the  
crowd,

I would throw down the pencil as the chisel  
And I would speak; no thought which ever stirred  
A human breast should be untold.

PARACELSUS.

---

JULY 10.

Of all the lamentable debts incurred  
By Man through buying knowledge, this were  
worst,

That he should find his last gain prove his first

Was futile—merely nescience absolute,  
Not knowledge in the bud which holds a fruit  
Haply undreamed of in the soul's spring-tide,  
Purs'd in the petals Summer opens wide,  
And Autumn, withering, rounds to perfect ripe,—  
Not this,—but ignorance, a blur to wipe  
From human records, late it graced so much.  
"Truth—this attainment? Ah, but such and  
such

Beliefs of yore seemed inexpugnable  
When we attained them! E'en as they so will  
This their successor have the due morn, noon,  
Evening and night—just as an old-world tune  
Wears out and drops away, until who hears  
Smilingly questions—This it was brought tears  
Once to all eyes,—this roused heart's rapture  
once?

So will it be with truth that, for the nonce,  
Styles itself truth perennial: 'ware its wile!  
Knowledge turns nescience,—foremost on the  
file,  
Simply proves first of our delusions.

PARLEYINGS.

---

JULY II.

Yet gifts should prove their use;  
I own the Past profuse  
Of power each side, perfection every turn:

Eyes, ears took in their dole,  
Brain treasured up the whole;  
Should not the heart beat once—"How good to  
live and learn?"

Not once beat "Praise be Thine!  
I see the whole design,  
I, who saw Power, shall see Love perfect, too;  
Perfect I call Thy plan;  
Thanks that I was a man!  
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what thou  
shalt do!"

RABBI BEN EZRA.

---

JULY 12.

What is man bound to but—assent, I say?  
Rather to rapture of thanksgiving: since  
That which seems vast to man to God is best,  
So, because God ordains it, best to man.  
Yet man,—the foolish, weak, and wicked—  
prays!  
Urges "My best were better, didst thou know!"

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

---

Right, promptly done, is twice right; right de-  
layed  
Turns wrong.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

JULY 13.

Henceforth man's existence bows to the monition, "Wait,"

Take the joys and bear the sorrows—neither with extreme concern!

Living here means nescience simply; 'tis next life that helps to learn.

Shut those eyes, next life will open,—stop those ears, next life will teach

Hearing's office,—close those lips, next life will give the power of speech!

Or, if action more amuse thee than the passive attitude,

Bravely bristle through thy being, busy thee for ill or good,

Reap this life's success or failure! Soon shall things be unperplexed

And the right and wrong, now tangled, lie unravelled in the next.

Life must needs be borne,—I also will that man become aware

Life has worth incalculable, every moment that he spends

So much gain or loss for that next life which on this life depends.

Good done here, be there rewarded,—evil, worked here, there amerced!

LA SAISIAZ.



---

JULY 14.

All love renders wise  
In its degree; from love which blends with love  
Heart answering heart, to that which spends it-  
self  
In silent, mad idolatry of some  
Pre-eminent mortal, some great soul of souls,  
Which ne'er will know how well it is adored.  
Love is never blind, but rather  
Alive to even the minutest spot  
That mars its object, and which Hate (suppressed  
So vigilant and searching) dreams not of.

---

JULY 15.

Alas, from the beginning love is whole  
And true: if sure of naught beside, most sure  
Of its own truth at least; nor may endure  
A crowd to see its face, that cannot know  
How hot the pulses throb its heart below.  
While its own helplessness and utter want  
Of means to worthily ministrant  
To what it worships, do but fan the more  
Its flame, extol the idol far before  
Itself as it would have it ever be.

---

SORDELLO.

JULY 16.

Had I gone  
Slightingly through my task, and so judged fit

To moderate my hopes; nay, were it now  
 My sole concern to exculpate myself,  
 End things or mend them,—why, I could not  
 choose

A humbler mood to wait for that event!  
 No, no, there needs not this: no, after all,  
 At most I have performed my share of the tasks;  
 The rest is God's concern: mine, merely this,  
 To know that I have obstinately held  
 By my own work.

PARACELSUS.

—————  
 JULY 17.

What's poetry except a power that makes?  
 And, speaking to one sense, inspires the rest,  
 Pressing them into its service; so  
 That who sees painting, seems to hear so well  
 The speech that's proper for the painted month;  
 And who hears music, feels his solitude  
 Peopled at once—for how count heart-beats  
 plain

Unless a company, with hearts which beat,  
 Come close to the musician, seen or no?  
 And who receives true verse at eye or ear,  
 Takes in (with verse) time, place, and person,  
 too,  
 So, links each sense on its sister-sense,  
 Grace-like: and what if but one sense of three

Front you at once? The sidelong pair conceive  
Through faintest touch of finest finger-tips,—  
Hear, see and feel, in faith's simplicity,  
Alike, what one was sole recipient of:  
Who hears the poem, therefore, sees the play.

BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE.

JULY 18.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good  
shall exist;  
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty; nor  
good, nor power  
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives  
for the melodist  
When eternity affirms the conception of an  
hour—  
The high that proved too high, the heroic for  
earth too hard,  
The passion that left the ground to lose itself  
in the sky,  
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the  
bard;  
Enough that he heard it once; we shall hear it  
by-and-by.

ABT VOGLER.

JULY 19.

Your stained and drooping vines their grapes  
bow down,

Nor blame those creaking trees bent with their  
fruit,

That apple-tree, with a rare after-birth  
Of peeping blooms sprinkled its wealth among!  
Then for the winds—what winds that ever raved  
Shall vex that ash which overlooks you both,  
So proud it wears its berries? Ah, at length,  
The old smile meet for her, the lady of this  
Sequestered nest! This kingdom, limited  
Alone by one old populous green wall  
Tenanted by the ever-busy flies.

Gray crickets and shy lizards and quick spiders,  
Each family of the silver-threaded moss—  
Which, look through, this way, and it appears  
A stubble-field or a cane-break, a marsh,  
Of bulrush whitening in the sun; laugh now!  
Fancy the crickets, each one in his house,  
Looking out, wondering at the world—or best,  
Yon painted snail, with his gay shell of dew,  
Traveling to see the glossy balls high up  
Hung by the caterpillar, like gold lamps.

PARACELSUS.

—————  
JULY 20.

Man shrivels to naught  
If matched with symbols of immensity;  
Must quail, forsooth, before a quiet sky

Or sea, too little for their quietude;  
 And, truly, somewhat in Sordello's mood  
 Confined its speciousness, while we slow sank  
 Down the near terrace to the farther bank,  
 And only one spot left from out the night  
 Glimmered upon the river opposite—  
 A breadth of watery heaven like a bay,  
 A sky-like space of water, ray for ray,  
 And star for star, one richness where they mixed  
 As this and that wing of an angel, fixed,  
 Tumultuary splendors folded in  
 To die.

SORDELLO.

— — —  
 JULY 21.

What's a star?

A world, or a world's sun: doesn't it serve  
 As taper also, transpierce, weather-glass,  
 And almanac? Are stars not set for signs  
 When we should shear our sheep, sow corn,  
 prune trees?  
 The Bible says so.

MR. SLUDGE, "THE MEDIUM."

— — —  
 See a word how it severeth!  
 Oh, power of life and death  
 In the tongue, as the Preacher saith!

A LOVER'S QUARREL.

JULY 22.

Having regard to immortality  
No less than life—did that which head and heart  
Prescribed my hand, in measure with its means  
Of doing—used my special stock of power—  
Not from the aforesaid head and heart alone,  
But every sort of helpful circumstance,  
Some problematic and some nondescript:  
All regulated by the single care  
I' the last resort—that I made thoroughly serve  
The when and how, toiled where was need, re-  
posed

As absolutely at the proper point,  
Braved sorrow, counted joy, just to one end:  
Namely, that just the creature I was bound  
To be, I should become, nor thwart at all  
God's purpose in creation. I conceive  
No other duty possible to man,—  
Highest mind, lowest mind,—no other law  
By which to judge life failure or success;  
What folk call being saved or cast away.

PRINCE HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU.

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JULY 23.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to  
a wish of my soul,  
All through my soul that praised as its wish  
flowed visibly forth,

All through music and me! For think, had I  
painted the whole,  
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the pro-  
cess so wonder-worth;  
Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect  
proceeds from cause,  
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how  
the tale is told;  
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to  
laws,  
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list  
enrolled.

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will  
that can,  
Existent behind all laws, that made them, and,  
lo, they are!  
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be  
allowed to man,  
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth  
sound, but a star.  
Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself  
is naught:  
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and  
all it said.  
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my  
thought:

And there! ye have heard and seen; consider  
and bow the head!

— — — — —  
ABT VOGLER.

JULY 24.

But Thou

Forgivest—so forgive these passionate thoughts  
Which come unsought and will not pass away!  
I know thee, who hast kept my path, and made  
Light for me in the darkness, tempting sorrow  
So that it reached me like a solemn joy:  
It were too strange that I should doubt thy love.

— — — — —  
PARACELSUS.

Get you behind the man I am now, you man  
that I used to be!

MARTIN RELPH.

— — — — —  
JULY 25.

Let us not always say,  
“Spite of this flesh today  
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the  
whole!”  
As the bird wings and sings,  
Let us cry “All good things  
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than  
flesh helps soul!”

Therefore I summon age  
To grant youth’s heritage,



Life's struggle having so far reached its term:  
Thence shall I pass, approved  
A man, for aye removed  
From the developed brute; a God though in the  
germ.

RABBI BEN EZRA.

---

JULY 26.

When the singers lift up their voice,  
And the trumpets made endeavor,  
Singing, "In God rejoice!"  
Saying, "In Him rejoice  
Whose mercy endureth forever!"

When the Temple filled with a cloud,  
Even the House of the Lord;  
Porch bent and pillar bowed:  
For the presence of the Lord,  
In the glory of his cloud,  
Has filled the House of the Lord.

EPILOGUE.

---

JULY 27.

But where will God be absent? In his face  
Is light, but in his shadow healing, too;  
Let Guido teach the shadow and be healed!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

Best love of all  
 Is God's: then why not have God's love befall  
 Myself?

PIPPA PASSES.

JULY 28.

The gray sea and the long black land;  
 And the yellow half-moon large and low;  
 And the startled little waves that leap  
 In fiery ringlets from their sleep,  
 As I gain the cove with pushing prow,  
 And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;  
 Three fields to cross till a farm appears;  
 A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch  
 And blue spurt of a lighted match,  
 And a voice less loud, though its joys and fears,  
 Then the two hearts beating each to each!

MEETING AT NIGHT.

JULY 29.

How should this earth's life prove my only  
 sphere?  
 Can I so narrow sense but that in life  
 Soul still exceeds it?

PAULINE.

And Michael's face  
 Still wears that quiet and peculiar light

Like the dim circlet floating 'round a pearl!

—————  
PARACELSUS.

JULY 30.

A sphere is but a sphere;  
Small, Great, are merely terms we bandy here;  
Since to the spirit's absoluteness all  
Are alike.

—————  
SORDELLO.

Man's work is to labor and learn—  
As best he may—earth here with heaven.

—————  
PACCHIAROTTI.

JULY 31.

Is it true that we are now, and shall be here—  
after,

But what and where depends on life's minute?  
Hails heavenly cheer or infernal laughter  
Our first step out of the gulf or in it?  
Shall man, such step within his endeavor,  
Man's face, have no more play and action  
Than joy which is crystallized forever,  
Or grief, an eternal petrification?

—————  
OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE.

We mortals cross the ocean of this world  
Each in his average cabin of a life:  
The best's not big, the worst yields elbow room.

—————  
BISHOP BLOUGHRAM'S APOLOGY.

## AUGUST.

Along the roadside, like the flowers of gold  
That twany Incas for their gardens wrought,  
Heavy with sunshine droops the goldenrod,  
And the red pennons of the cardinal-flowers  
Hang motionless upon their upright staves.  
The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,  
Wing-weary with its long flight from the south,  
Unfelt; yet, closely scanned, yon maple leaf  
With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,  
Confesses it. The locust by the wall  
Stabs the noon-silence with his sharp alarm.  
A single hay-cart down the dusty road  
Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep  
On the load's top. Against the neighboring hill,  
Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,  
The sheep show white, as if a snowdrift still  
Defied the dog-star. Through the open door  
A drowsy smell of flowers — gray heliotrope,  
And white sweet clover, and shy mignonette —  
Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends  
To the pervading symphony of peace.

WHITTIER.

AUGUST I.

Now what should this be for? The sun's decline

Seems as he lingered lest he lose some act  
Dread and decisive, some prodigious fact  
Like thunder from the safe sky's sapphirine  
About to alter earth's conditions, packed  
With fate for nature's self that waits, aware  
What mischief unsuspected in the air  
Menaces momentarily a cataract.

There it is that yonder space extends  
Untrenched upon by any vagrant tree,  
Shrub, need well-nigh; they keep their bounds,  
leave free

The platform for what actors? Foes or friends,  
Here come they trooping silent; heaven suspends  
Purpose the while they range themselves. I see!  
Bent on a battle, two vast powers agree  
This present and no after-contest ends  
One or the other's grasp at rule in reach  
Over the race of man—host fronting host,  
As statue statue fronts—wrath-molten each,  
Solidified by hate,—earth halved almost,  
To close once more in chaos. Yet two shapes  
Show prominent, each from the universe  
Of minions round about him, that disperse  
Like cloud obstruction when a blot escapes.  
Who flames first? Macedonian, is it thou?

Aye, and who fronts thee, King Darius, drapes  
His form with purple, fillet-folds his brow.

—————  
PARLEYINGS.

AUGUST 2.

God spoke, and gave us the word to keep:  
Bid men fold the hands in sleep  
'Mid a faithless world,—at watch and ward,  
Till Christ at the end relieve our guard.

—————  
HOLY-CROSS DAY.

True, I thank God, I ever said "you sin,"  
When a man did sin if I could not say it,  
I glared at him: if I could not glare it,  
I prayed against him: then my part seemed over.  
God's may begin yet: so it will, I trust.

—————  
A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.

AUGUST 3.

Youth ended, I shall try  
My gain or loss thereby;  
Be the fire ashes, what survives is gold:  
And I shall weigh the same,  
Give life its praise or blame:  
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being  
old.

For note, when evening shuts,  
A certain moment cuts

The deed off, calls the glory from the gray;  
A whisper from the west  
Shoots—add this to the rest,  
Take it and try its worth: Here dies another day.

—————  
RABBI BEN EZRA.

AUGUST 4.

Dante once prepared to paint an angel:  
Whom to please? you whisper, "Beatrice!"  
While he mused and traced it and retraced it,  
(Peradventure with a pen corroded  
Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,  
When, his left hand i' the hair o' the wicked,  
Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,  
Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,  
Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle,  
Let the wretch go festering through Florence)—  
Dante, who loved well because he hated,  
Hated wickedness that hinders loving,  
Dante standing, studying his angel,—  
In there broke the folk of his Inferno.  
Says he—"Certain people of importance"  
(Such he gave his daily dreadful line to)  
"Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet,"  
Says the poet—"then I stopped my painting."

VI.

You and I would rather see that angel,

Painted by the tenderness of Dante,  
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno.

## VII.

You and I will never see that picture.  
While he mused on love and Beatrice,  
While he softened o'er his outlined angel,  
In they broke, those "people of importance;"  
We and Bice bear the loss forever.

————— ONE WORD MORE.

AUGUST 5.

Humanity's mishap; the wrinkled brow, bald  
pate,  
And rheumy eyes of Age, peaked chin and parch-  
ment chap,  
Were signs of day-work done, and wage-time  
near,—mayhap  
Merely; but, Age reduced to simple greed and  
guile,  
Worn apathetic else as some smooth slab, ere-  
while  
A clear-cut man-at-arms i' the pavement, till  
foot's tread  
Effaced the sculpture, left the stone you saw  
instead,—  
Was not that terrible beyond the mere uncouth?  
Well, and perhaps the next revolting you was  
Youth,



Stark ignorance and crude conceit, half smirk,  
 half stare  
 On that frank fool-face, gay beneath its head of  
 hair  
 Which covers nothing.

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

AUGUST 6.

So what is there to smile or frown at?  
 What is left us, save in growth  
 Of soul, to rise up, far past both,  
 From the gift looking to the Giver,  
 And from the cistern to the River,  
 And from the infinite to Infinity?  
 And from man's dust to God's divinity?

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

AUGUST 7.

Believe—and our whole argument breaks up.  
 Enthusiasm's the best thing, I repeat;  
 Only we can't command; fire and life  
 Are all, dead matter's nothing, we agree:  
 And be it a mad dream or God's very breath,  
 The fact's the same,—belief's fire, one in us,  
 Makes of all else mere stuff to show itself;  
 We penetrate our life with such a glow  
 As fire lends wood and iron.

BISHOP BLOUGHRAM'S APOLOGY.

---

AUGUST 8.

An angel warns me, too,  
 Man should be humble; you are very proud;  
 And God, dethroned, has doleful plagues for  
 such!

PARACELSUS.

---

But the soul is not the body: and the breath is  
 not the flute:  
 Both together make the music; either marred,  
 and all is mute.

LA SAISIAZ.

---

AUGUST 9.

The love of peace, care for the family,  
 Contentment with what's bad but might be  
 worse—  
 Good movements these! and good, too, discon-  
 tent,  
 So long as that spurs good, which might be best,  
 Into becoming better, anyhow.

PRINCE HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU.

---

Savage I was sitting in my house late, lone;  
 Dreary, weary with the long day's work;  
 Head of me, heart of me, stupid as a stone:  
 Tongue-tied now, now blaspheming like a  
 Turk;

When, in a moment, just a knock, call, cry,  
Half a pang and all a rapture, there again  
were we!—

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

---

AUGUST 10.

Of a Power above you still  
Which, utterly incomprehensible,  
Is out of rivalry, which thus you can  
Love, though unloving all conceived by man—  
What need! And of—none the minutest duct  
To that out—nature, naught that would instruct  
And so let rivalry begin to live—  
But of a Power its representative  
Who, being for authority the same,  
Communication different, should claim  
A course, the first chose but this last revealed—  
This Human clear, as that Divine concealed—  
What utter need!

SORDELLO.

---

AUGUST 11.

Gone you were, and I shall never see that  
earnest face again  
Grow transparent, grow transfigured with the  
sudden light that leapt  
At the first word's provocation, from the heart-  
deeps where it slept.

. . . . .

You supposed that few or none had known and  
 loved you in the world;  
 Maybe! flower that's full blown tempts the but-  
 terfly, not flower that's furred.  
 But more learned sense unlocked you, loosed  
 the sheath and let expand  
 Bud to bell and outspread flower-shape at the  
 least warm touch of hand  
 —Maybe, throb of heart, beneath which—quick-  
 ening farther than it knew—  
 Treasure oft was disembosomed, scent all strange  
 and unguessed hue.  
 Disembosomed, re-embosomed, — must one  
 memory suffice,  
 Prove I knew an Alpine-rose which all beside  
 named Edelweiss?

LA SAISIAZ.

AUGUST 12.

See how bright St. Saviour's spire  
 Flames in the sunset, all its figures quaint,  
 Gay in the glancing light; you might conceive  
 them  
 A troop of yellow-vested white-haired Jews  
 Bound for their own land where redemption  
 dawns.

PARACELUS.

My perfect wife, my Leonor,  
 Oh, heart my own, oh, eyes, mine, too,

Whom else could I look backward for,  
With whom beside should I dare pursue  
The path gray heads abhor?

BY THE FIRESIDE.

---

AUGUST 13.

Up I sprang alive,  
Light in me, light without me, everywhere  
Change! A broad yellow sunbeam was let fall  
From heaven to earth,—a sudden drawbridge  
lay,  
Along which marched a myriad merry motes,  
Mocking the flies that crossed them and re-  
crossed

In rival dance, companions new-born, too.  
On the house-eaves, a dripping shag of weed  
Shook diamonds on each dull gray lattice-square,  
As first one, then another bird leapt by,  
And light was off, and lo, was back again,  
Always with one voice,—where are two such  
joys?—

The blessed building-sparrow! I stepped forth,  
Stood on the terrace,—o'er the roofs, such sky!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

AUGUST 14.

The prize is in the process: knowledge means  
Ever-renewed assurance by defeat

That victory is somehow still to reach,  
But love is victory, the prize itself.

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

Somehow, no one ever plucked  
A rag, even, from the body of the Lord,  
To wear and mock with, but, despite himself,  
He looked the greater and was the better.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

AUGUST 15.

Such fancy might have tempted him be false,  
But this man chose truth and was wiser so.  
He recognized that for great minds i' the world,  
There is no trial like the appropriate one  
Of leaving little minds their liberty  
Of littleness to blunder on through life,  
Now aiming at right ends by foolish means,  
Now, at absurd achievement through the aid  
Of good and wise endeavor—to acquiesce  
In folly's life-long privilege, though with power  
To do the little minds the good they need,  
Despite themselves, by just abolishing  
Their right to play the part and fill the place  
I' the scheme of things He schemed who made  
alike

Great minds and little minds saw use for each.

SAVIOUR OF SOCIETY.

AUGUST 16.

With me, youth led—I will speak now,  
No longer watch you as you sit  
Reading by firelight, that great brow  
And the spirit-small hand propping it  
Mutely—my heart knows how—

When if I think but deep enough,  
You are wont to answer, prompt as rhyme;  
And you, too, find without a rebuff  
The response your soul seeks many a time  
Piercing its fine flesh-stuff—

BY THE FIRESIDE.

AUGUST 17.

We must never part.  
Are we not halves of one dissevered world  
Whom this strange chance unites once more?  
Part? Never!  
Till thou, the lover, know: and I, the knower,  
Love—until both are saved.

PARACELSUS.

Better have failed in the high aim, as I,  
Than vulgarly in the low aim succeed.

THE INN ALBUM.

AUGUST 18.

So, still within this life,  
Though lifted o'er its strife,

Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,  
    "This rage was right i' the main,  
    That acquiescence vain:  
The Future I may face now I have proved the  
    Past.

For more is not reserved  
    To man, with soul just nerved  
To act tomorrow what he learns today;  
    Here, work enough to watch  
    The Master work, and catch  
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true  
    play.

RABBI BEN EZRA.

---

AUGUST 19.

Type needs antitype;  
As night needs day, as shine needs shade,  
    so good  
Needs evil; how were pity understood  
Unless by pain?

PARLEYINGS.

---

Oh, live and love worthily, bear and be bold!

JAMES LEE'S WIFE.

---

AUGUST 20.

—In youth I looked to these very skies,  
And probing their immensities,



I found God there, his visible power;  
Yet felt in my heart, amid all its sense  
Of the power, an equal evidence  
That his love, there, too, was the nobler dower.  
For the loving worm within its clod  
Were dimmer than a loveless god  
Amid his worlds, I will dare say.  
You know what I mean: God's all, man's naught.

----- CHRISTMAS-EVE.

AUGUST 21.

Pure faith indeed—you know not what you ask!  
Naked belief in God the Omnipotent,  
Omniscient, Omnipresent, sears too much  
The sense of conscious creatures to be borne.  
It were the seeing him, no flesh shall dare,  
Some think, Creation's meant to show him faith:  
I say it's meant to hide him all it can,  
And that's what all the blessed evil's for.  
Its use in Time is to environ us,  
Our breath, our drop of dew, with shield enough  
Against that sight till we can bear its stress.  
Under a vertical sun, the exposed brain  
And lidless eye and disemprisoned heart  
Less certainly would wither up at once  
Than mind, confronted with the truth of him.  
But time and earth case-harden us to live,  
The feeblest sense is trusted most; the child

Feels God a moment, ichors o'er the place,  
 Plays on and grows to be a man like us.  
 With me, faith means perpetual unbelief  
 Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot  
 Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe.

BISHOP BLOUGHRAM'S APOLOGY.

---

AUGUST 22.

Today

Takes in account the work of yesterday;  
 Has not the world a Past now, its adept  
 Consults ere he dispense with or accept  
 New aids?

SORDELLO.

---

Let things be, not seem;  
 I counsel rather, do, and nowise dream!

PARLEYINGS.

---

AUGUST 23.

Man must be fed

With angels' food, forsooth; and some few  
     traces of a diviner nature which looks out  
 Through his corporeal baseness, warrant him  
 In a supreme contempt of all provision  
 For his inferior tastes—some stragglings marks  
 Which constitute his essence, just as truly  
 As here and there a gem would constitute

The rock, their barren bed, one diamond.  
But were it so—were man all mind—he gains  
A station little enviable. From God  
Down to the lowest spirit ministrant,  
Intelligence exists which casts our mind  
Into immeasurable shade. No, no;  
Love, hope, fear, faith—these make humanity;  
These are its signs and note and character.

————— PARACELUSUS.

AUGUST 24.

As life wanes, all its care and strife and toil  
Seem strangely valueless, while the old trees  
Which grew by our youth's home, the waving  
mass  
Of climbing plants heavy with bloom and dew,  
The morning swallows with their songs like  
words,  
All these seem clear and only with our  
thoughts;  
So, aught connected with my early life,  
My rude songs or my wild imaginings,  
How I look on them—most distant amid  
The fever and the stir of after years!

————— PAULINE.

AUGUST 25.

One friend in that path shall be,  
To secure my steps from wrong;

.....

One to count night or day for me,  
Patient through the watches long,  
Serving most with none to see.

A SERENADE AT THE VILLA.

---

God uses us to help each other so,  
Lending our minds out.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI.

---

AUGUST 26.

Prognostics told  
Man's near approach; so in man's self arise  
August anticipations, symbols, types  
Of a dim splendor ever on before  
In that eternal circle life pursues.  
For men begin to pass their nature's bound,  
And find new hopes and cares which fast sup-  
plant  
Their proper joys and griefs; they grow too  
great  
For narrow creeds of right and wrong, which  
fade  
Before the unmeasured thirst for good; while  
peace  
Rises within them ever more and more.

PARACELSUS.

---

All work was fighting—every harm—defeat,  
And every joy obtained—a victory!

LURIA.

AUGUST 27.

Venice seems a type  
Of Life—'twixt blue and blue extends a stripe,  
As Life, the somewhat, hangs 'twixt naught and  
naught;

'Tis Venice and 'tis Life.

SORDELLO.

---

Open my heart and you will see  
Graved inside of it, "Italy."

DE GUSTIBUS.

---

That man believes in Florence as a saint  
Tied to the wheel believes in God.

LURIA.

---

AUGUST 28.

Here is earth's noblest, nobly garlanded—  
Her bravest champion with his well-won prize—  
Her best achievement, her sublime amends  
For countless generations fleeting fast  
And followed by no trace; the creature-god  
She instances when angels would dispute  
The title of her brood to rank with them.  
Angels, this is our angel! Those bright forms  
We clothe with purple, crown and call to thrones  
Are human, but not his; those are but men  
Whom other men press round and kneel before;  
Those palaces are dwelt in by mankind;  
Higher provision is for him you seek

Amid our pomps and glories; see it here!  
Behold earth's paragon! Now, raise thee, clay!

—————  
PARACELSUS.

AUGUST 29.

One great aim, like a guiding star above—  
Which tasks strength, wisdom, stateliness, to  
lift

His manhood to the height that takes the prize;  
A prize not near—lest overlooking earth  
He rashly springs to seize it—nor remote,  
So that he rests upon his path content,  
But the faint circlet prophesies the orb,  
He see so much as, just evolving these,  
The stateliness, the wisdom and the strength,  
To due completeness, will suffice this life,  
And lead him at his grandest to the grave.  
After this star, out of a night he springs;  
A beggar's cradle for the throne of thrones  
He quits; so, mounting, feels each step he  
mounts,

Nor, as from each to each exultingly  
He passes, overleaps one grade of joy.

This for his own good. COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

—————  
AUGUST 30.

As peace returned, I sought out some pursuit;  
And song rose, no new impulse but the one

With which all others best could be combined.  
 My life has not been that of those whose heaven  
 Was lampless save where poesy shone out;  
 But as a clime where glittering mountain tops  
 And glancing sea and forests steeped in light  
 Give back reflected the far-flashing sun;  
 For music (which is earnest of a heaven,  
 Seeing we know emotions strange by it,  
 Not else to be revealed,) is like a voice,  
 A low voice calling fancy, as a friend,  
 To the green woods in the gay summer time;  
 And she fills all the way with dancing shapes  
 Which have made painters pale, and they go on  
 Till stars look at them and minds call to them  
 As they leave life's path for the twilight world  
 Where the dead gather. This was not at first;  
 For I scarce knew what I would do. I had  
 An impulse but no yearning—only sang.

PAULINE.

AUGUST 31.

As it were better, youth  
 Should strive, through acts uncouth,  
 Toward making, than repose on aught found  
 made;  
 So better, age, exempt  
 From strife, should know, than tempt  
 Further. Thou waitedst age; wait death, nor be  
 afraid!

Enough now, if the Right  
And Good and Infinite  
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine  
own,  
With knowledge absolute,  
Subject to no dispute  
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee  
feel alone.

Be there, for one and all,  
Severed great minds from small,  
Announced to each his elation in the Past!  
Was I, the world arraigned,  
Were they, my soul disdained,  
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us  
peace at last!

RABBI BEN EZRA.



## SEPTEMBER.

O earth! thou hast not any wind which blows  
That is not music. Every weed of thine,  
Pressed rightly, flows in aromatic wine;  
And every humble hedgerow flower that grows,  
And every little brown bird that doth sing,  
Hath something greater than itself, and bears  
A loving word to every living thing—  
Albeit it holds the message unawares.  
All shapes and sounds have something which is not  
Of them. A spirit broods amid the grass;  
Vague outlines of the everlasting thought  
Lie in the melting shadows as they pass;  
The touch of an Eternal Presence thrills  
The breezes of the sunset and the hills,  
Sometimes—we know not how, nor why, nor whence—  
The twitter of the swallows 'neath the eaves,  
The shimmer of the light amid the leaves,  
Will strike up thro' the thick roofs of our sense,  
And show us things which seers and sages saw.  
In the gray earth's green dawn something doth stir,  
Like organ hymns within us, and doth awe.

RICHARD REALF, *in Christian Work.*

## SEPTEMBER 1.

The day's adventures for the day suffice—  
 Its constant tribute of perceptions strange,  
 With sleep and stir in healthy interchange,  
 Suffice, and leave him for the next at ease  
 Like the great palmer-worm that strips the trees,  
 Eats the life out of every luscious plant,  
 And, when September finds them sere or scant,  
 Puts forth two wondrous winglets, alters quite,  
 And hies him after unforeseen delight.

—————  
 SORDELLO.

As the adventurous spider, making light  
 Of distance, shoots her threads from depth to  
     height,  
 From barbican to battlement, so flung  
 Fantasies forth and in their center swung  
 Our architect,—the breezy morning fresh  
 Above, and merry,—all his waving mesh  
 Laughing with lucid dew-drops rainbow-edged.

—————  
 SORDELLO.

## SEPTEMBER 2.

My heart will have it he speaks true! My blood  
 Beats close to this Tiburzio as a friend.  
 If he had stept into my watch-tent, night  
 And the wild beast desert full of foes around,  
 I should have broke the bread and given the  
     salt,

Secure, and, when my hour of watch was done,  
 Taken my turn to sleep between his knees  
 Safe in the untroubled brow and honest cheek.  
 Oh world, where all things pass and naught  
     abides,  
 Oh life, the long mutation—is it so?  
 Is it with life as with the body's change?  
 —Where, e'er though better follow, good must  
     pass,  
 Nor manhood's strength can mate with boy-  
     hood's grace,  
 Nor age's wisdom, in its turn, find strength.  
 But silently the first gift dies away  
 And though the new stays, never both at once.

— — — LURIA.

SEPTEMBER 3.

What, then the long day dies at last? Abrupt  
 The sun that seemed, in stooping, sure to melt  
 Our mountain-ridge, is mastered; black the belt  
 Of westward crags, his gold could not corrupt,  
 Barriers again the valley, lets the flow  
 Of lavish glory waste itself away  
 —Whither? For new climes, fresh eyes break  
     the day!  
 Night was not to be baffled. If the glow were  
 All that's gone from us! Did clouds, afloat

So filmily but now, discard no rose,  
Sombre throughout the fleeciness that grows  
A sullen uniformity. I note  
Rather displeasure,—in the overspread  
Change from the swim of gold to one pale lead  
Oppressive to malevolence,—than late  
Those amorous yearnings when the aggregate  
Of cloudlets pressed that each and all might sate  
Its passion and partake in relics red  
Of day's bequeathment; now a form instead  
Estranges, and affrights who needs must face  
On and on till his journey ends; but where?  
Caucasus? Lost now in the night. Away  
And far enough lies that Arcadia.  
The human heroes tread the world's dark way  
No longer. Yet I dimly see almost—  
Yes, for my last adventure! 'Tis a ghost.  
So drops away the beauty. There he stands  
Voiceless, scarce stirs with deprecating hands.

. . . . .

PARLEYINGS.

—————  
SEPTEMBER 4.

What imports  
Fasting or feasting? Do thy day's work, dare  
Refuse no help thereto, since help refused  
Is hindrance sought and found.

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

“Let Time fulfil his task,  
And, till the scythe-sweep find no obstacle,  
Let man be patient?”

RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY.

SEPTEMBER 5.

A painful trial, very sore, was yours;  
All that could draw out, marshal in array  
The selfish passions 'gainst the public good—  
Slights, scorns, neglects, were heaped on you  
to bear;  
And ever you did bear and bow the head!  
It had been sorry trial, to precede  
Your feet, hold up the promise of reward  
For living gleam; your footsteps kept the track  
Through death and doubt; take all the light at  
once!  
Trial is over, consummation shines;  
Well have you served, as well, henceforth, com-  
mand!

LURIA.

SEPTEMBER 6.

I leaned on the turf,  
I looked at a rock  
Left dry by the surf;  
For the turf, to call it grass were to mock;  
Dead to the roots, so deep was done  
The work of the summer sun.

And the rock lay flat  
As an anvil's face:  
No iron like that!  
Baked dry; of a weed, of a shell, no trace:  
Sunshine outside, but ice at the core,  
Death's altar by the lone shore.

On the turf sprang gay  
With his films of blue,  
No cricket. I'll say,  
But a warhorse, barded and chanfroned too,  
The gift of a quixote-mage to his knight,  
Real fairy, with wings all right.

On the rock they scorch  
Like a drop of fire  
From a brandished torch,  
Fall two red fans of a butterfly:  
No turf, no rock: in their ugly stead,  
See, wonderful blue and red!  
Is it not so  
With the minds of men?  
The level and low,  
The burnt and bare, in themselves; but then  
With such a blue and red grace, not theirs,—  
Love settling unawares!

ON THE CLIFF.

SEPTEMBER 7.

Where is the use of the lips' red charm,  
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,  
And the blood that blues the inside arm—

Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,  
The earthly gifts to an end divine?  
A lady of clay is as good, I trow.

THE STATUE AND THE BUST.

---

SEPTEMBER 8.

Everywhere—  
Sorrow, the heart must bear,  
Sits in the home of each, companions there,  
Many a circumstance, at least,  
Touches the very breast,  
For these,  
Whom any sent away—he knows:  
And in the live man's stead,  
Armour and ashes reach  
The house of each.

————— AGAMEMNON.

SEPTEMBER 9.

All my soul breaks forth  
How I do love you . . .  
Let me know you mine,  
Prove you mine, write my name upon your  
brow,

Hold you and love you, and then die away  
If God please, with completion in my soul!

—————  
IN A BALCONY.

SEPTEMBER 10.

Dante, pacer of the shore  
Where gluttoned hell disgortheth filthiest gloom  
Unbitten by its whining sulphur spume—  
Or where the grieved and obscure waters slope  
Into darkness quieted by hope:  
Plucker of amaranths grown beneath God's eye  
In gracious twilight where His chosen lie.

—————  
SORDELLO.

SEPTEMBER 11.

Be sure they sleep not whom God needs! Nor  
fear  
Their holding light His charge, when every hour  
That finds that charge delayed is a new death.  
This for the faith in which I trust.

—————  
PARACELBUS.

But my fact is,  
'Tis one thing to know and another to practise,  
And thence I conclude, that the real God func-  
tion  
Is to furnish a motive and injunction  
For practising what we know already.

CHRISTMAS-EVE.



## SEPTEMBER 12.

Oh, the little more, and how much it is!  
And the little less, and what worlds away!  
How a sound shall quicken content to bliss,  
Or a breath suspend the blood's best play,  
And life be a proof of this.

Had she willed it, still had stood the screen  
So slight, so sure, 'twixt my love and her;  
I could fix her face with a guard between,  
And find her soul as when friends confer,  
Friends—lovers that might have been.

————— BY THE FIRESIDE.

## SEPTEMBER 13.

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?  
This: No artist lives and loves, that longs not  
Once, and only once, and for one only,  
(Ah, the prize!) to find his love a language  
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient—  
Being nature that's an art to others,  
Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.  
Ay, of all the artists living, loving,  
None but would forego his proper dowry,—  
Does he paint? He fain would write a poem,—  
Does he write? He fain would paint a picture,  
Put to proof art alien to the artists,  
Once, and only once, and for one only,

So to be the man and leave the artist,  
Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

ONE WORD MORE.

SEPTEMBER 14.

And she is gone; sweet human love is gone;  
'Tis only when they spring to heaven that angels  
Reveal themselves to you; they sit all day  
Beside you, and lie down at night by you  
Who care not for their presence, muse or sleep,  
And all at once they leave you, and you know  
them.

PARACELSUS.

SEPTEMBER 15.

The Tower of Hate is outgrown, far and strange;  
A transitory shame of long ago,  
It dies into the sand from which it sprung:  
But thine, Love's rock built Tower, shall fear  
no change;  
God's self laid stable earth's foundations so,  
When all the morning-stars together sang.

HELEN'S TOWER.

God! Thou art Love! I build my faith on that.

PARACELSUS.

Oh, I should fade—'tis willed so! Might I save,  
Gladly I would, whatever beauty gave

Joy to thy sense, for that was precious too.  
It is not to be granted. But the soul  
Whence the love comes, all ravage leaves that  
    whole;  
Vainly the flesh fades: soul makes all things  
    new.

ANY WIFE TO ANY HUSBAND.

---

SEPTEMBER 16.

Let us, O my dove,  
Let us be unabashed of soul,  
As earth lies bare to heaven above!  
How is it under our control  
To love or not to love?

TWO IN A CAMPAGNA.

---

Oh, to love less what one has injured! Dove,  
Whose pinions I have rashly hurt, my breast—  
Shall my heart's warmth not nurse thee into  
    strength?  
Flower I have crushed, shall I not care for thee?

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON.

---

SEPTEMBER 17.

I shall never, in the years remaining,  
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,  
Make you music that should all-express me;  
So it seems: I stand on my attainment.

This of verse alone, one life allows me,  
 Verse and nothing else have I to give you  
 Other heights in other lives, God willing;  
 All the gifts from all the heights, you own,  
 Love!

ONE WORD MORE.

SEPTEMBER 18.

Let my hand—this hand—lie in your own, my  
 own true friend!  
 Hand and hand with you.

PARACELSUS.

Have you a friend to count on?  
 One sure friend.

LURIA.

SEPTEMBER 19.

Day's turn is over, now arrives the night's.  
 Oh, lark, be day's apostle  
 To mavis, merle and throstle,  
 Bid them their betters jostle  
 From day and its delights!  
 But at night, brother owlet, over the woods,  
 Toll the world to thy chantry;  
 Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods  
 Full compliments with gallantry:  
 Then, owls and bats,  
 Cows and twats,

Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods  
Adjourn to the owl-stump pantry!

PIPPA PASSES.

---

SEPTEMBER 20.

Do not the dead wear flowers when dressed for  
God?

Say—I am all in flowers from head to foot!  
Say—not one flower of all he said and did,  
Might seem to flit unnoticed, fade unknown,  
But dropped a seed, has grown a balsam-tree  
Whereof the blossoming perfumes the place  
At this supreme of moments.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

A touch divine —

And the sealed eyeball owns the mystic rod.  
Visibly through His garden walketh God.

SORDELLO.

---

SEPTEMBER 21.

A sudden little river crossed my path  
As unexpected as a serpent comes.  
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;  
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath

For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see the wrath  
Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spume.

So petty, yet so spiteful! All along,  
Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;  
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit  
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng:  
The river which had done them all the wrong,  
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME.

---

SEPTEMBER 22.

Autumn has come like Spring returned to us,  
Won from her girlishness: like one returned  
A friend that was a lover, nor forgets  
The first warm love, but full of sober thoughts,  
Of fading years; whose soft mouth quivers yet  
With the old smile, but yet so changed and still!

PAULINE.

---

What joy is better than the news of friends  
Whose memories were a solace to me oft,  
As mountain-baths to wild fowls in their flight!

PARACELSUS.

---

SEPTEMBER 23.

Sun! all the heaven is glad for thee: what care  
If lower mountains light their snowy phares  
At thine effulgence, yet acknowledge not  
The source of day? Their theft shall be their  
bale:

For after ages shall retrack thy beams,  
And put aside the crowd of busy ones  
And worship thee alone—the master-mind,  
The thinker, the explorer, the creator!  
Then, who would sneer at the convulsive throes  
With which thy deeds were born, would scorn as  
well

The sheet of winding subterraneous fire  
Which, pent and writhing, sends no less at last  
Huge islands up amid the simmering sea.  
Behold thy might in me! Thou hast infused  
Thy soul in mine, and I am grand as thou,  
Seeing I comprehend thee—I so simple,  
Thou so august. I recognize thee first;  
I saw thee rise, I watched thee early and late,  
And though no glance reveal thou dost accept  
My homage—thus no less I proffer it,  
And bid thee enter gloriously thy rest.

PARACELSUS.

SEPTEMBER 24.

How he stands  
With eve's last sunbeam staying on his hair  
Which turns to it as if they were akin;  
And those clear smiling eyes of saddest blue  
Nearly set free, so far they rise above  
The painful, fruitless stirring of the brow  
And enforced knowledge of the lips, firm-set





Enter each and all, and use their service,  
Speak from every mouth—the speech, a poem.  
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,  
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving:  
I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's,  
Karshish, Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty.  
Let me speak this once in my true person,  
Not as Lippo, Roland or Andrea,  
Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence:  
Pray you, look on these, my men and women,  
Take and keep my fifty poems finished;  
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!  
Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

ONE WORD MORE.

---

SEPTEMBER 27.

Not on the vulgar mass  
Called "work," must sentence pass,  
Things done, that took the eye and had the  
price;  
O'er which, from level stand,  
The low world laid its hand,  
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a  
trice.

But all, the world's coarse thumb  
And finger failed to plumb,  
So passed in making up the main account;

All instincts immature,  
 All purposes unsure,  
 That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the  
 man's amount.

Thoughts hardly to be packed  
 Into a narrow act,  
 Fancies that broke through language and es-  
 caped;  
 All I could never be,  
 All, men ignored in me,  
 This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the  
 pitcher shaped.

RABBI BEN EZRA.

SEPTEMBER 28.

I would I could adopt your will,  
 See with your eyes, and set my heart  
 Beating by yours, and drink my fill  
 At your soul's springs,—your part my part  
 In life, for good and ill.

No. I yearn upward, I touch you close,  
 Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,  
 Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck the rose  
 And love it more than tongue can speak—  
 Then the good minute goes.

TWO IN A CAMPAGNA.

SEPTEMBER 29.

I stood at Naples once, a night so dark  
I could have scarce conjectured there was earth  
Anywhere, sky or sea or world at all;  
But the night's black was burst through by a  
blaze—  
Thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned  
and bore,  
Through her whole length of mountain visible;  
There lay the city thick and plain with spires,  
And, like a ghost disshrouded, white the sea.  
So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,  
And Guido see, one instant, and be saved.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

SEPTEMBER 30.

Oh, moment, one and infinite!  
The water slips o'er stock and stone.  
The West is tender, hardly bright:  
How gray at once is the evening grown—  
One star, its Chrysolite!

---

We two stood there with never a third,  
But each by each, as each knew well;  
The sights we saw and the sounds we heard,  
The lights and the shades made up a spell  
Till the trouble grew and stirred.

BY THE FIRESIDE.

## OCTOBER.

Aye, thou art welcome, heaven's delicious breath!  
When woods begin to wear the crimson leaf,  
And suns grow meek, and the meek suns grow brief,  
And the year smiles as it draws near its death.  
Wind of the sunny South! oh, still delay  
In the gay woods and in the golden air,  
Like to a good old age released from care;  
Journeying, in long serenity, away.  
In such a bright, late quiet, would that I  
Might wear out life like thee, 'mid bowers and brooks,  
And, dearer yet, the sunshine of kind looks,  
And music of kind voices ever nigh,  
And when my last sand twinkled in the glass,  
Pass silently from men as thou dost pass.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

OCTOBER 1.

Oh, good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth,  
This Autumn morning! How he sets his bones  
To bask i' the sun, and thrust out knees and feet  
For the ripple to run over in its mirth,  
Listening the while, where the sea-lark twitters  
sweet.

This is the doctrine, simple, ancient, true;  
Such is life's trials, as old earth smiles and  
knows.

If you loved only what were worth your love,  
Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you.  
Make the low nature better by your throws!  
Give earth yourself, go up for gain above!

————— JAMES LEE'S WIFE.

OCTOBER 2.

A turn and we stand at the heart of things,  
The woods are round us, heaped and dim;  
From slab to slab how it slips and springs,  
The thread of water, single and slim,  
Through the ravage some torrent brings!

Does it feed the little lake below?  
That speck of white just on its marge  
Is Pella; see, in the evening-glow,  
How sharp the silver spear-heads charge  
When Alps meet heaven in snow.

On our other side is the straight-up rock,  
 And a path is kept 'twixt the gorge and it  
 By boulder-stones where lichens mock  
 The marks on a math, and small ferns fit  
 Their teeth to the polish block.

BY THE FIRESIDE.

OCTOBER 3.

Love, if you knew the light  
 That your soul casts on my sight,  
 How I look to you  
 For the good and true,  
 And the beauteous and the right.

A LOVER'S QUARREL.

For mankind springs  
 Salvation by each hindrance interposed;  
 They climb.

SORDELLO.

OCTOBER 4.

As for grass, it grew as scant as hair  
 In leprosy: thin dry blades pricked the mind  
 Which underneath looked kneaded up with  
 blood.

One stiff blind horse, his bone a-stare,  
 Stood stupefied, however he came there.

CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME.

It's not worth having, such imperfect faith,  
No more available to do faith's work  
Than unbelief like mine. Whole faith or none!

BISHOP BLOUGHRAM'S APOLOGY.

---

OCTOBER 5.

Yes, every body that leaves life sees all  
Softened and bettered; so with other sights:  
To me at least was never evening yet  
But seemed far beautifuller than day,  
For past is past.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

---

Though the whole earth might lie in wickedness,  
We had the truth, might leave the rest to God.

A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

---

OCTOBER 6.

The year  
Began to find its early promise sere  
As well. Thus beauty vanishes; thus stone  
Outlingers flesh; nature's and his youth gone,  
They left the world to you, and wished you joy.  
When, stopping his benevolent employ,  
A presage shuddered through the welkin; harsh  
The earth's remonstrance followed. 'Twas the  
marsh  
Gone of a sudden. Mincio, in its place,

Laughed, a broad water, in next morning's face,  
And, where the mists broke up immense and  
    white

I' the steady wind, burned like a splith of light  
Out of the crashing of a myriad of stars.

SORDELLO.

---

OCTOBER 7.

What matters happiness?  
Duty! There's man's one moment. This is  
    yours!

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES.

---

Duty done is the soul's fireside.

---

OCTOBER 8.

My own, see where the years conduct!  
At first, 'twas something our two souls  
Should mix as mists do; each is sucked  
    Into each now; on, the new stream rolls,  
Whatever rocks obstruct.

Think, when our one soul understands  
The great Word which makes all things new—  
When earth breaks up and Heaven expands—  
    How will the change strike me and you  
In the house not made with hands?

BY THE FIRESIDE.



OCTOBER 9.

How soon a smile of God can change the world!  
How we are made for happiness—how work  
Grows play, adversity a winning fight!

—————  
IN A BALCONY.

My business is not to remake myself,  
But make the absolute best of what God made.

BISHOP BLOUGHRAM'S APOLOGY.

—————  
OCTOBER 10.

Sun-treader, I believe in God and truth  
And love; and as one just escaped from death  
Would bind himself in bands of friends to feel  
He lives indeed, so, I would lean on thee!  
Thou must be ever with me, most in gloom  
If such must come, but chiefly when I die.  
For I seem, dying, as one going in the dark  
To fight a giant: but live thou forever,  
And be to all what thou hast been to me!  
All in whom this wakes pleasant thoughts of me  
Know my last state is happy, free from doubt  
Or touch of fear. Love me and wish me well.

—————  
PAULINE.

OCTOBER 11.

I've a Friend over the sea;  
I like him, but he loves me.  
It all grew out of the books I write,

They find such pleasure in his sight  
That he slaughters you with savage looks  
Because you don't admire my books.

TIME'S REVENGE.

A healthy spirit like a healthy frame  
Craves aliment in plenty—all the same,  
Change, assimilates its aliment.

SORDELLO.

OCTOBER 12.

Pray, does Luther dream  
His arguments convince by their own force  
The crowds that own his doctrine? No, indeed!  
His plain denial of established points  
Ages had sanctified and men supposed  
Could never be oppugned while earth was under  
And heaven above them—points which chance or  
time  
Affected not—did more than the array  
Of argument which followed. Boldly deny!  
There is much breath-stopping, hair-stiffening  
Awhile; then, amazed glances, mute awaiting  
The thunderbolt which does not come: and next,  
Reproachful wonder and inquiry; those  
Who else had never stirred, are able now  
To find the rest out for themselves, perhaps  
To outstrip him who set the whole at work,  
—As never will my class its instructor

And you saw Luther?

'Tis a wondrous soul!

True: the so-heavy chain which galled mankind  
Is shattered, and the noblest of us all  
Must bow to the deliverer—nay, the worker  
Of our own project—we who long before  
Had burst our trammels, but forgot the crowd,  
We should have taught; still groaned beneath  
their load:

This he has done and nobly.

PARACELSUS.

OCTOBER 13.

For God above

Is great to grant, as mighty to make,

And creates the love to reward the love;

I claim you still for my own love's sake!

Delayed it may be for more lives yet,

Through worlds I shall traverse not a few;

Much to learn, much to forget,

Ere the time be come for taking you.

EVELYN HOPE.

OCTOBER 14.

Truths escape

Time's insufficient garniture; they fade,

They fall—those sheathings now grown sere,  
whose aid

Was infinite to truth they wrapped, saved fine

---

And free through March frost; May dews crystalline  
 Nourish truth merely,—does June boast the fruit  
 As—not new venture merely, but, to boot,  
 Novel creation? Soon shall fade and fall  
 Myth after myth—the husk-like lies I call  
 New truth's corolla — safeguard: Autumn  
 comes,  
 So much the better.

PARLEYINGS.

OCTOBER 15.

As when the martin migrates; Autumn claps  
 Her hands, cries "Winter's coming, will be here,  
 Off with you ere the white teeth overtake!  
 Flee!" So I fled.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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Clairveaux in Autumn is restorative . . .  
 All the same  
 Clairvaux looked grayer than a month ago.  
 Unglossed was shrubbery, unglorified  
 Each copse, so wealthy once, the garden-plots,  
 The orchard-walks, showed dearth and dreariness.  
 The sea lay out at distance crammed by cloud  
 Into a leaden wedge; and sorrowful  
 Sulked field and pasture with persistent rain.

RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY.

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OCTOBER 16.

I know a Mount the gracious Sun perceives  
First, when he visits, last, too, when he leaves  
The world; and, vainly favored, it repays  
The day-long glory of his steadfast gaze  
By no change of its large calm front of snow.  
And underneath the Mount a Flower I know,  
He cannot have perceived, that changes ever  
At his approach; and, in the lost endeavor  
To live his life, has parted one by one,  
With all a flower's true graces, for the grace  
Of being but a foolish mimic sun,  
With ray-like florets round a disk-like face.  
Men nobly call by many a name the Mount  
As over many a land of theirs its large  
Calm front of snow like a triumphal targe  
Is reared, and still with old names, fresh names  
vie  
Each to its proper praise and own accord;  
Men call the Flower the Sunflower, sportively.

RUDEL TO THE LADY OF TRIPOLI.

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OCTOBER 17.

Time for rain! for your long hot dry Autumn  
Had net-worked with brown  
The white skin of each grape on the branches,  
Marked like a quail's crown.

Those creatures you make such account of,  
 Whose heads,—speckled white  
 Over brown like a great spider's back,  
 As I told you last night,—  
 Your mother bites off for her supper  
 Red-ripe as could be,  
 Pomegranates were chapping and splitting  
 In halves on the tree:  
 And betwixt the loose walls of great flintstone,  
 Or in the thick dust  
 On the path, or straight out of the rock-side,  
 Wherever could thrust  
 Some burnt sprig of bold hardy rock-flower  
 Its yellow face up,  
 For the prize were great butterflies fighting  
 Some five for one cup.

THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY.

OCTOBER 18.

I took you—how could I otherwise?  
 For a world to me, and more;  
 For all, love greatens and glorifies  
 Till God's aglow, to the loving eyes,  
 In what was mere earth before.

. . . . .

And such as you were, I took you for mine;  
 Did not you find me yours,  
 To watch the olive and wait the vine,

And wonder when rivers of oil and wine  
Would flow, as the Book assures?

\_\_\_\_\_ JAMES LEE'S WIFE.

OCTOBER 19.

Love, we are in God's hand  
How strange now looks the life He makes us  
lead,  
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!  
I feel He laid the fetter; let it lie!

\_\_\_\_\_ ANDREA DEL SARTO.

Save him, dear God! It will be like thee: bathe  
him  
In light and life!

\_\_\_\_\_ PARACELBUS.

OCTOBER 20.

What if, alone in the domain of light,  
Thou miss the accustomed signs, remark eclipse?  
Shalt thou still gaze on ground nor lift a lid,—  
Steady in thy superb prerogative,  
Thy inch of inkling,—nor once face the doubt,  
Is the sphere above thee, darkness to be felt?

\_\_\_\_\_ THE RING AND THE BOOK.

OCTOBER 21.

That Autumn eve was stilled:  
A last remains of sunset dimly burned  
O'er the far forests, like a torch-flame turned

By the wind back upon its bearer's hand  
 In one long flare of crimson; as a brand,  
 The woods beneath lay black.

SORDELLO.

Autumn wins your best by its mute  
 Appeal to sympathy for its decay.

PARACELSUS.

OCTOBER 22.

Round as the wild creatures, overhead the tree,  
 Underfoot the moss-tracks,—life and love with  
 these!

I to wear a fawn-skin, thou to dress in flowers,  
 All the long lone summer-day, that greenwood  
 life of ours!

Rich-pavilioned, rather,—still the world with-  
 out,—

Inside—gold-roofed silk-walled silence round  
 about!

Queen it thou in purple,—I, at watch and ward,  
 Couched beneath the columns, gaze, thy slave,  
 love's guard!

So for us no world? Let throngs press thee to  
 me!

Up and down amid men, heart by heart fare we!  
 Welcome, squalid vesture, harsh voice, hateful  
 face!



God is soul, souls I and thou: with souls should  
souls have place.

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

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OCTOBER 23.

And what a world for each  
Must somehow be i' the soul,—accept that mode  
of speech,—  
Whether an aura gird the soul, wherein it seems  
To float and move, a belt of all the glints and  
gleams  
It struck from out that world, its weaklier fellows  
So dead and cold; or whether these not so much  
surround  
As pass into the soul itself, add worth to worth,  
As mine enriches blood, and straightway send it  
forth,  
Conquering and to conquer, through all eternity,  
That's battle without end.

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

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OCTOBER 24.

For he was slipping into years' apace  
And years make men restless—they need must  
spy  
Some certainty, some sort of end assured,  
Some sparkle, though from topmost beacon-top  
That warrants life a harbor through the haze.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years;  
 Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB.

OCTOBER 25.

I will be happy if but for once:  
 Only help me, Autumn weather,  
 Me and my cares to screen, ensconce  
 In luxury's sofa-lap of leather!

Sleep? Nay, comfort—with just a cloud  
 Suffusing day too clear and bright;  
 Eve's essence, the single drop allowed  
 To sully, like milk, noon's water-white.

Let gauziness shade, not shroud—adjust,  
 Dim and not deaden,—somehow sheathe  
 Aught sharp in the rough world's busy thrust,  
 If it reach me through dreaming's vapor-  
 wreath.

Be life so, all things ever the same!  
 For, what has disarmed the world? Outside,  
 Quiet and peace: inside, nor blame  
 Nor want, nor wish whate'er betide.

What is it like that has happened before?  
 A dream? No dream, more real by much.

A vision? But fanciful days of yore  
Brought many: mere musing seems not such.

Perhaps but a memory, after all!  
—Of what came and when a woman leant  
To feel for my brow where her kiss might fall.  
Truth ever, truth only the excellent!

DUBIETY.

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OCTOBER 26.

The Monastery called Convertites,  
Meant to help women because these helped  
Christ,—

A thing existent only while it acts,  
Does as designed, else a nonentity,—  
For what is an idea unrealized?—  
Pompilia is consigned to these for help.  
They do help; they are prompt to testify  
To her pure life and saintly dying days.  
She dies, and lo, who seemed so poor, proves  
rich!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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OCTOBER 27.

See this soul of ours!  
How it strives weakly in the child, is loosed  
In manhood, clogged in sickness, back compelled  
By age and waste, set free at last by death;

Why is it flesh enthralles it or enthrones?  
What is this flesh we have to penetrate?

PARACELSUS.

Rejoice that man is hurled  
From change to change unceasingly;  
His soul's wings never furled!

JAMES LEE'S WIFE.

A wound i' the flesh no doubt wants prompt re-  
dress;  
It smarts a little today, well in a week,  
Forgotten in a month, or never, or now, revenge!  
But a wound to the soul? That rankles more  
and more!

OCTOBER 28.

By this, we roll the clouds away  
Of precedent and custom, and at once  
Bid the great beacon-light God sets in all,  
The conscience of each bosom shine upon  
The guilt, of Strafford; each man lay his hand  
Upon his breast and judge.

STRAFFORD.

OCTOBER 29.

No, when the fight begins within himself,  
A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his  
head,

Satan looks up between his feet—both tug—  
He's left, himself, i' the middle: the soul wakes  
And grows. Prolong that battle through life!  
Never leave growing till the life to come!

BISHOP BLOUGHRAM'S APOLOGY.

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Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
Or what's a heaven for?

ANDREA DEL SARTO.

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OCTOBER 30.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,  
That metaphor! and feel  
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—  
Thou, to whom fools propound,  
When the wine makes its round,  
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone,  
seize today!"

Fool! All that is, at all,  
Lasts ever, past recall;  
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:  
What entered into thee,  
That was, is, and shall be:  
Time's wheel runs back or steps: Potter and clay  
endure.

RABBI BEN EZRA.

OCTOBER 31.

Then life is—to wake not sleep,  
Rise and not rest, but press  
From earth's level where blindly creep  
Things perfected, more or less,  
To the heaven's height, far and steep.

Where, amid what strifes and storms  
May wait the adventurous guest,  
Power is Love—transports, transforms  
Who aspired from worst to best,  
Sought the soul's world, spurned the worms'.

I have faith such end shall be;  
From the first, Power was—I knew.  
Life has made clear to me  
That, strive but for closer view,  
Love were as plain to see.

When see? When there dawns a day,  
If not on the homely earth,  
Then yonder, worlds away,  
Where the strange and new have birth,  
And Power comes full in play.

ASOLANDO.

## NOVEMBER.

Who said November's face was grim?  
Who said her voice was harsh and sad?  
I heard her sing in wood-paths dim,  
I met her on the shores so glad,  
So smiling, I could kiss her feet,  
There never was a month so sweet.

October's splendid robes, that hid  
The beauty of the white-limbed trees,  
Have dropped in tatters; yet amid  
Their perfect forms the gazer sees  
A proud wood-monarch here and there,  
Garments of wine-dipped crimson wear.

In precious flakes the autumnal gold  
Is clinging to the forest's fringe;  
Yon bare twig to the sun will hold  
Each separate leaf, to show the tinge  
Of glorious rose-light reddening through  
Its jewels, beautiful as few.

Where short-lived wild flowers bloomed and died,  
The slanting sunbeams fall across  
Vine 'broideries, woven from side to side,  
Above mosaics of tinted moss.  
So does the Eternal Artist's skill  
Hide beauty under beauty still.

And if no note of bee or bird  
Through the rapt stillness of the woods  
Or the sea's murmurous trance be heard,  
A presence in these solitudes

Upon the spirit seems to press  
The dew of God's dear silences.

And if, out of some inner heaven,  
With soft relenting, comes a day  
Whereto the heart of June is given,  
All subtle scents and spicery  
Through forest crypts and arches steal  
With power unnumbered hurts to heal.

LUCY LARCOM.

NOVEMBER 1.

How well I know what I mean to do  
When the long dark autumn evenings come;!  
And where, my soul, is thy pleasant hue?  
With the music of all thy voice, dumb  
In life's November, too!

I shall be found by the fire, suppose,  
O'er a great wise book as beseemeth age,  
While the shutters flap as the cross-wind blows,  
And I turn the page, and I turn the page,  
Not verse now, only prose!

BY THE FIRESIDE.

NOVEMBER 2.

Oh, the sense of the yellow mountain-flow'ers,  
And thorny balls, each three in one,  
The chestnuts throw on our path in showers!  
For the drop of the woodland fruit's begun,  
These early November hours,



That crimson the creeper's leaf across  
 Like a splash of blood, intense, abrupt,  
 O'er a shield else gold from rim to boss,  
 And lay it for show on the fairy-cupped  
 Elf-needed mat of moss,

By the rose-flesh mushrooms, undivulged.  
 Last evening—nay, in today's first dew,  
 Yon sudden coral nipple bulged,  
 Where a freaked fawn-colored flaky crew  
 Of toadstools peep indulged.

And yonder, at foot of the fronting ridge  
 That takes the turn to a range beyond,  
 Is the chapel reached by the one-arched bridge  
 Where the water is stopped in a stagnant pond  
 Danced over by the midge.      BY THE FIRESIDE.

NOVEMBER 3.

I. .

Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell,  
 ere thou speak,  
 Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it,  
 and did kiss his cheek.  
 And he: "Since the King, O my friend, for thy  
 countenance sent,  
 Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until  
 from his tent

Thou return with the joyful assurance the King  
liveth yet,  
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the  
water be wet.  
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of  
three days,  
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of  
prayer nor of praise,  
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended  
their strife,  
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks  
back upon life.

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's  
child with his dew  
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still  
living and blue  
Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as  
if no wild heat  
Were now raging to torture the desert!" SAUL.

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NOVEMBER 4.

II.

Then I, as was meet,  
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose  
on my feet,  
And ran o'er the sands burnt to powder. The  
tent was unlooped;

I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under  
I stooped;  
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all  
withered and gone,  
That extends to the second inclosure, I groped  
my way on  
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then  
once more I prayed,  
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was  
not afraid  
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And  
no voice replied;  
At the first I saw naught but the blackness; but  
soon I descried  
A something more black than the blackness—the  
vast, the upright  
Main prop which sustains the pavilion, and slow  
into sight  
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of  
all,  
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent-  
roof, showed Saul.  
He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms  
stretched out wide  
On the great cross-support in the centre, that  
goes to each side;  
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there, as,  
caught in his pangs

And waiting his change, the king-serpent all  
heavily hangs  
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliver-  
ance come  
With the spring-time,—so agonized Saul, drear  
and stark, blind and dumb.

SAUL.

NOVEMBER 5.

III.

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we  
twine round our chords  
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide—  
those sunbeams like swords!  
And I first played the tune all our sheep know,  
as, one after one,  
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding  
be done.  
They are white and untorn, by the bushes, for  
lo, they have fed  
Where the long grasses stifle the water within  
the stream's bed;  
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star  
follows star,  
Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue and  
so far!  
—Then the tune for which quails on the corn-  
land will each leave his mate

To fly after the player; then, what makes the  
crickets elate  
Till for boldness they fight one another; and  
then, what has weight  
To set the quick jerbon a-musing outside his  
sand house—  
There are none such as he for a wonder, half  
bird and half mouse!  
God made all the creatures and gave them our  
love and our fear,  
To give sign, we and they are his children, one  
family here.

SAUL.

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NOVEMBER 6.

IV.

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their  
wine-song, when hand  
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship,  
and great hearts expand  
And grow one in the sense of this world's life.—  
And then, the last song  
When the dead man is praised on his journey—  
“Bear, bear him along,  
With his few faults shut up like dead flow’rets!  
Are balms seeds not here  
To console us? The land has none left such as  
he on the bier,

O, would we might keep thee, my brother!"—  
And then, the glad chaunt  
Of the marriage,—first go the young maidens,  
next, she whom we vaunt  
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling.—And  
then, the great march  
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and but-  
tress an arch  
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our  
friends? Then, the chorus intoned  
As the Levites go up to the altar in glory en-  
throned.  
But I stopped here: for here in the darkness Saul  
groaned.  
And I paused, held my breath in such silence,  
and listened apart;  
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered:  
and sparkles 'gan dart  
From the jewels that woke in his turban, at once  
with a start,  
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies cour-  
ageous at heart.  
So the head; but the body still moved not, still  
hung there erect.  
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it  
unchecked,  
As I sang:—

SAUL.

NOVEMBER 7.

V.

“O, our manhood’s prime vigor! no spirit feels  
waste,  
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew  
unbraced.  
O, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock  
up to rock,  
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree,  
the cool silver shock  
Of a plunge in a pool’s living water, the hunt of  
the bear,  
And the sultriness showing the lion is crouched  
in his lair.  
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with  
gold dust divine,  
And the locust-flesh steep in the pitcher, the full  
draught of wine,  
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where  
bulrushes tell  
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly  
and well.  
How good is man’s life, the mere living! How  
fit to employ  
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever  
in joy!  
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father,  
whose sword thou didst guard

When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for  
glorious reward?  
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother,  
held up as men sung  
The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear  
her faint tongue  
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one  
more attest.  
I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime,  
and all was for best'?  
Then they sung through their tears in strong  
triumph, not much, but the rest.  
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the  
working whence grew  
Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the  
spirit strained true:  
And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood of  
wonder and hope,  
Present promise and wealth of the future beyond  
the eye's scope,—  
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch, a people is  
thine;  
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on  
one head combine!  
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love  
and rage (like the throe  
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and lets  
the gold go),



High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame  
crowning them,—all  
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—  
King Saul!"

SAUL.

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NOVEMBER 8.

VI.

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,—heart, hand,  
harp and voice,  
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each  
bidding rejoice  
Saul's fame in the light it was made for—as  
when, dare I say,  
The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains  
through its array,  
And upsoareth the cherubim—chariot—"Saul!"  
cried I, and stopped,  
And waited the thing that should follow. Then  
Saul, who hung propped  
By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was  
struck by his name.  
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons  
goes right to the aim,  
And some mountain, the last to withstand her,  
that held (he alone,  
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers)  
on a broad breast of stone

A year's snow bound about for a breastplate—  
leaves grasp of the sheet?  
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously  
down to his feet,  
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet,  
your mountain of old,  
With his rents, the successive bequeathing of  
ages untold—  
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each  
furrow and scar  
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest—  
all hail, there they are!  
—Now again to be softened with verdure, again  
hold the nest  
Of the dove, tempt the goat with its young to  
the green on its crest  
For their food in the ardors of summer. One  
long shudder thrilled  
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank  
and was stilled  
At the King's self left standing before me, re-  
leased and aware.  
What was gone, what remained? All to traverse  
'twixt hope and despair,  
Death was past, life not come; so he waited.  
Awhile his right hand  
Held the brow, helped the eyes left too vacant  
forthwith to remand

To their place what new objects should enter:  
 'twas Saul as before.  
 I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor  
 was hurt any more  
 Than by slow pallid sunsets in Autumn, ye watch  
 from the shore,  
 At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean—a sun's  
 slow decline  
 Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'er-  
 lap and entwine  
 Base with base to knit strength more intently;  
 so, arm folded arm  
 O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

SAUL.

NOVEMBER 9.

VII.

What spell or what charm,  
 (For awhile there was trouble within me,) what  
 next should I urge,  
 To sustain him, where song had restored him?—  
 Song filled to the verge  
 His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all  
 that it yields  
 Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty:  
 beyond, on what fields,  
 Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to  
 brighten the eye

And bring blood to the lip, and commend them  
the cup they put by?  
He saith, "It is good;" still he drinks not; he lets  
one praise life,  
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

Then fancies grew rife,  
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when  
round me the sheep  
Fed in silence—alone, the one eagle wheeled  
slow as in sleep;  
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world  
that might lie  
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strife 'twixt  
the hill and the sky;  
And I laughed—"Since my days are ordained to  
be passed with my flocks,  
Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains  
and the rocks,  
Dream the life I am never to mix with, and  
image the show  
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I  
hardly shall know!  
Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the  
courage that gains,  
And the prudence that keeps what men strive  
for." And now these old trains

Of vague thought came again; I grew surer, so,  
once more the string  
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as  
thus—

SAUL.

NOVEMBER 10.

VIII.

“Yea, my King,”

I began—thou dost well in rejecting mere com-  
forts that spring  
From the mere mortal life held in common by  
man and by brute;  
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our  
soul it bears fruit.  
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree;—how  
its stem trembled first  
Till it passed the kid’s lip, the stag’s antler; then  
safely outburst  
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest  
when these, too, in turn,  
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect;  
yet more was to learn,  
E’en the good that comes in with the palm fruit.  
Our dates shall we slight,  
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or  
care for the plight  
Of the palm’s self whose slow growth produced  
them? Not so! stem and branch

Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while  
the palm wine shall stanch  
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I from  
thee such wine  
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit  
be thine!  
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou  
still shalt enjoy  
More indeed, than at first when unconscious, the  
life of a boy.  
Crush that life, and behold its wine running!  
Each deed thou hast done  
Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until  
e'en as the sun  
Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil  
him, though tempests efface,  
Can find nothing his own deed produced not,  
must everywhere trace  
The results of his past summer-prime,—so, each  
ray of thy will,  
Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long  
over, shall thrill  
The whole people, the countless, with ardor, till  
they, too, give forth  
A like cheer to their sons, who, in turn, fill the  
South and the North  
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of.

Carouse in the past!

But the license of age has its limit; thou diest at last:

As the lion when age dims his eyeball the rose at her height,

So with man—so his power and his beauty forever take flight.

No! Again a long draught of my soul-wine! Look forth o'er the years!

Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the seers!

Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb—bid arise

A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,

Let it mark where the great First King slumbers: whose frame would ye know?

Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go

In great characters cut by the scribe,—Such was Saul, so he did;

With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid,—

For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault to amend,

In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they shall spend

(See, in tablets 'tis level before them) their  
praise, and record  
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story—the  
statesman's great word  
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The  
river's a-wave  
With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other  
when prophet-winds rave;  
So the pen gives unborn generations their due  
and their part  
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank  
God that thou art!

SAUL.

NOVEMBER II.

IX.

And behold while I sang . . . . but O  
Thou who didst grant me that day,  
'And before it not seldom hast granted thy help  
to essay,  
Carry on and complete an adventure,—my shield  
and my sword  
In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy  
word was my word,—  
Still be with me, who then at the summit of  
human endeavor  
And scaling the highest, man's thought could,  
gazed hopeless as ever



On the new stretch of heaven above me—till,  
mighty to save,  
Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance—  
God's throne from man's grave!  
Let me tell out my tale to its ending—my voice  
to my heart  
Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels  
last night I took part,  
As this morning I gather the fragments, alone  
with my sheep,  
And still fear lest the terrible glory vanish like  
sleep!  
For I make in the gray dewy covert, while  
Hebron upheaves  
The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder,  
and Kidron retrieves  
Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

SAUL.

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NOVEMBER 12.

X.

I say, then,—my song  
While I sang thus, assuming the monarch, and  
even more strong  
Made a proffer of good to console him—he  
slowly resumed  
His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right  
hand replumed

His black locks to their wonted composure, ad-  
justed the swathes  
Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that his  
countenance bathes,  
He wipes off with the robe, and he girds now  
his loins as of yore,  
And feels slow for the armlets of pine, with the  
clasp set before.  
He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—ere error had  
bent  
The broad brow from the daily communion; and  
still, though much spent  
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the  
same, God did choose,  
To receive what a man may waste, desecrate,  
never quite lose.  
So sank he along by the tent-prop till, stayed by  
the pile  
Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he  
leaned there awhile,  
And sat out my singing,—one arm 'round the  
tent-prop, to raise  
His bent head, and the other hung slack—till I  
touched on the praise  
I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man  
patient there;  
And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then  
first I was 'ware

That he sat, as I say, with my head just above  
his vast knees  
Which were thrust out on each side around me,  
like oak roots which please  
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked  
up to know  
If the best I could do had brought solace; he  
spoke not, but slow  
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it  
with care  
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my  
brow; through my hair  
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back  
my head, with king power—  
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do  
a flower.  
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that  
scrutinized mine—  
And O, all my heart how it loved him! but where  
was the sign?  
I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father, invent-  
ing a bliss,  
I would add, to that life of the past, both the  
future and this;  
I would give thee new life altogether, as good,  
ages hence,  
As this present,—had love but the warrant, love's  
heart to dispense!"

SAUL.

NOVEMBER 13.

## XI.

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—  
no song more! outbroke—  
I have gone the whole round of creation; I saw  
and I spoke;  
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, re-  
ceived in my brain  
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork—  
returned him again  
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I  
saw;  
I repeat, as a man may of God's work—all's  
love, yet all's law.  
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each  
faculty tasked  
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a  
dewdrop was asked.  
Have I knowledge? confounded it shines at wis-  
dom laid bare.  
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank,  
to the Infinite Care!  
Do I task any faculty highest; to image success?  
I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more  
and no less,  
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is  
seen God

In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul  
and the clod.  
And thus looking within and around me, I ever  
renew  
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending  
upraises it, too.)  
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's  
all-complete,  
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to  
his feet.  
Yet with all this abounding experience, this deity  
known,  
I shall dare to discover some promise, some gift  
of my own.  
There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to  
hoodwink,  
I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh as I  
think),  
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, not ye,  
I worst  
E'en the Giver in one gift—Behold, I could lose  
if I durst!  
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may  
o'ertake  
God's own speed in the one way of love I abstain  
for love's sake.  
—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther?  
When doors great and small,

Nine-and-ninety flew ope at an touch, should the  
 hundred appall?  
 In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the  
 greatest of all?  
 Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ulti-  
 mate gift,  
 Do I doubt that his own love can compete with  
 it? Here, the parts shift?  
 Here, the creature surpass the Creator,—the end,  
 what Began?

SAUL.

NOVEMBER 14.

XII.

Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for  
 this man,  
 And dare doubt He alone shall not help him, who  
 yet alone can?  
 Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare  
 will, much less power,  
 To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the mar-  
 velous dower  
 Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make  
 such a soul,  
 Such a body, and then such an earth for in-  
 sphering the whole?  
 And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears  
 attest

These good things being given, to go on, and  
give one more, the best?  
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, main-  
tain at the height  
This perfection,—succeed with life's day-spring,  
death's minute of night?  
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul, the  
mistake,  
Saul, the failure, the ruin he seems now,—and  
bid him awake  
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to  
find himself set  
Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a new  
harmony yet  
To be run and continued, and ended—who  
knows—or endure!  
The man taught enough by life's dream, of the  
rest to make sure.  
By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensi-  
fied bliss,  
And the next world's reward and repose, by the  
struggle in this.

SAUL.

---

NOVEMBER 15.

XIII.

I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest, 'tis I  
who receive:

In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to  
believe.  
All's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover, as  
prompt as my prayer  
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these  
arms to the air.  
From thy will stream the worlds, life and nature,  
thy dread Sabbaoth:  
I will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why am  
I not loth  
To look that, even that, in the face, too? Why is  
it I dare  
Think but lightly of such impuissance? What  
stops my despair?  
This,—'tis not what man does which exalts him,  
but what man would do!  
See the King—I would help him but cannot, the  
wishes fall through.  
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow  
poor to enrich,  
To fill up his life, stave my own out:, I would—  
knowing which,  
I know that my service is perfect. O speak  
through me now!  
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst  
thou—so wilt thou!  
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest,  
uttermost crown—



And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up  
nor down  
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by  
no breath  
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins  
issue with death!  
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty be  
proved  
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being  
Beloved!  
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest  
shall stand the most weak.  
'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my  
flesh, that I seek  
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it  
shall be  
A Face like my face that receives thee; a man  
like to me,  
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever; a Hand  
like this hand  
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!  
See the Christ stand!

SAUL.

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NOVEMBER 16.

XIV.

I know not too well how I found my way home  
in the night.

There were witnesses, cohorts about me to left  
and to right,  
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive,  
the aware:  
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as  
strugglingly there,  
As a runner beset by the populace famished for  
news—  
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened,  
hell loosed with her crews;  
And the stars of night beat with emotion, and  
tingled and shot  
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge;  
but I fainted not,  
For the Hand still impelled me at once and sup-  
ported, suppressed  
All tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy  
behest,  
Till the rapture was shut in itself and the earth  
sank to rest.  
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered  
from earth—  
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's  
tender birth;  
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of  
the hills;  
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the  
sudden mind thrills;

In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each  
with eye sidling still  
Though averted with wonder and dread; in the  
birds stiff and chill,  
That rose heavily, as I approached them, made  
stupid with awe;  
E'en the serpent that slid away silent,—he felt  
the new law.  
The same stared in the white humid faces up-  
turned by the flowers;  
The same worked in the heart of the cedar and  
moved the vine-bowers:  
And the little brooks witnessing murmured per-  
sistent and low,  
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—e'en  
so, it is so!

SAUL.

NOVEMBER 17.

Was not Elisha once?

Who bade them lay his staff on a corpse-face,  
There was no voice, no hearing: he went in  
Therefore, and shut the door upon them twain,  
And prayed unto the Lord; and he went up  
And lay upon the corpse, dead on the couch,  
And put his mouth upon its mouth his eyes  
Upon its eyes, his hands upon its hands,  
And stretched him on the flesh; the flesh waxed  
warm:

And he returned, walked to and fro the house,  
 And went up, stretched him on the flesh again,  
 And the eyes opened. 'Tis a credible feat  
 With the right man and way.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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NOVEMBER 18.

Who knows most, doubts most; entertaining  
 hope,

Means recognizing fear; the keener sense  
 Of all comprised within our actual scope  
 Recoils from aught beyond earth's dim and  
 dense.

Who, grown familiar with the sky, will grope  
 Henceforward among groundlings? That's  
 offence

Just as indubitably; stars abound  
 O'erhead, but then—what flowers make glad the  
 ground!

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIR.

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NOVEMBER 19.

Well, early in Autumn, at first winter-warning,  
 When the stag had to break with his foot of a  
 morning,

A drinking-hole out of the fresh tender ice  
 That covered the pond till the sun, in a trice,  
 Loosening it, let out a ripple of gold,

And another and another, and faster and faster,  
'Till, dimpling to blindness, the wide water rolled.

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS.

---

All service, therefore, rates  
Alike, nor serving one part, immolates  
The rest: but all in time.

SORDELLO.

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NOVEMBER 20.

Look not thou down but up!  
To uses of a cup,  
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,  
The new wine's foaming flow,  
The Master's lips aglow!  
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst  
thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,  
Thee, God, who moulded men;  
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,  
Did I—to the wheel of life  
With shapes and colors rife,  
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake thy  
thirst!

So, take and use thy work;  
Amend what flaws may lurk,

What strain o' the stuff what warpings past the  
aim!

My times be in thy hand!

Perfect the cup as planned!

Let age approve of youth, and death complete  
the same.

RABBI BEN EZRA.

NOVEMBER 21.

I liken to this play o' the body—fruitless strife  
To slip the sea and hold the heaven—my spirit's  
life

'Twixt false, whence it would break, and true,  
where it would bide,

I move it, yet resist; am up-borne every side  
By what I beat against, an element too gross  
To live in, did not soul duly obtain her dose  
Of life-breath, and inhale from truth's pure pleni-  
tude

Above her, snatch and gain enough to just illude  
With hope that some brave bound may baffle  
evermore

The obstructing medium, make who swarm  
henceforward soar:

—Gain scarcely snatched when, foiled by the very  
effort, souse,

Underneath ducks the soul, her truthward yearn-  
ings dowse

Deeper in falsehood! Ay, but fitted less and less  
To bear in nose and mouth old briny bitterness,  
Proved alien more and more; since each experi-  
ence proves

Air—the essential good, not sea, wherein who  
moves

Must thence, in the act, escape, apart from will  
or wish;

Move a mere hand to take water—need, jelly-  
fish,

Upward you tend! And yet our business with  
the sea

Is not with air, but just o' the water, watery;  
We must endure the false, no particle of which  
Do we acquaint us with, but up we mount a  
pitch

Above it, find our head reach truth, while hands  
explore

The false below; so much while here we bathe,—  
no more.

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

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NOVEMBER 22.

Oh, how will your country show next week,  
When all the vine-boughs  
Have been stripped of their foliage to pasture  
The mules and the cows?  
Last eve I rode over the mountains;

Your brother, my guide,  
Soon left me, to feast on the myrtles  
That offered, each side,  
Their fruit-balls, black, glossy and luscious,—  
Or strip from the sorbs  
A treasure or, rosy and wondrous,  
Those hairy gold orbs!  
But my mule picked his sure sober path out,  
Just stopping to neigh  
When he recognized down in the valley  
His mates on their way  
With the faggots and barrels of water;  
And soon we emerged  
From the plain, where the woods could scarce  
follow;  
And still as we urged  
Our way, the woods wondered, and left us,  
As up we still trudged,  
Though the wild path grew wilder each instant,  
And place was e'en grudged  
'Mid the rock-chasms and piles of loose stones  
Like the loose broken teeth  
Of some monster which climbed there to die  
From the ocean beneath—  
Place was grudged to the silver-gray fume-need  
That clung to the path,  
And dark rosemary ever a-dying  
That 'spite the wind's wrath,



So loses the salt rock's face to seaward,  
And lenticks as stanch  
To the stone where they root and bear berries,  
And . . . what shows a branch  
Coral-colored, transparent, with circlets  
Of pale sea-green leaves;  
Over all trod my mule with the caution  
Of gleaners o'er sheaves,  
Still, foot after foot like a lady,  
Till, round after round,  
He climbed to the top of Calvano,  
And God's own profound  
Was above me, and round me the mountains,  
And under, the sea,  
And within me my heart to bear witness  
What was and shall be.

THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY.

---

NOVEMBER' 23.

To know

Rather consists in opening out a way  
Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,  
Than in effecting entry for a light  
Supposed to be without. Watch narrowly  
The demonstration of a truth, its birth,—  
And you trace back the effluence to its spring  
And source within us: where broods radiance  
vast,

To be elicited, ray by ray, as chance  
Shall favor.

PARACELSUS.

NOVEMBER 24.

Such am I: the secret's mine now!  
She has lost me, I have gained her:  
Her soul's mine: and thus, grown perfect,  
I shall pass my life's remainder.  
Life will just hold out the proving  
Both our powers, alone and blended;  
And then, come the next life quickly!  
This world's use will have been ended.

CRISTINA.

NOVEMBER 25.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance  
Of plastic circumstance,  
This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain arrest;  
Machinery just meant  
To give thy soul its bent,  
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently im-  
pressed.

What though the earlier grooves,  
Which ran the laughing loves  
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?  
What though, about thy rim,  
Skull-things in order grim,

Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner  
stress?

\_\_\_\_\_ RABBI BEN EZRA.

NOVEMBER 26.

Love is the only good in the world  
Henceforth be loved as heart can love,  
Or brain devise, or hand approve.

\_\_\_\_\_ THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS.

A pretty woman's worth some pains to see,  
Nor is she spoiled, I take it,  
If a crown completes the forehead pale  
And tresses pure.

\_\_\_\_\_ COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

There's a woman like a dew-drop, she's so purer  
than the purest;  
And her noble heart's the noblest, and her sure  
faith's the surest.

\_\_\_\_\_ NOVEMBER 27.

Was it for mere fool's play, make-believe and  
murmuring,  
So we battled it like men, not boylike sulked  
or whipped?  
Each of us heard God's "Come!" and each was  
coming:  
Soldiers all, to forward-face, not sneaks to lag  
behind!

How of the field's fortune? That concerned our  
Leader!

Led, we struck our stroke nor cared for doings  
left and right;

Each as on his sole head, failer or succeder,  
Lay the blame or lit the praise; no care for  
cowards; fight!

EPILOGUE.

NOVEMBER 28.

Shakespeare!—to such name's sounding, what  
succeeds

Fitly as silence? Falter forth the spell,—

Act follows word, the speaker knows full well,

Nor tampers with its magic more than needs.

Two names there are: That which the Hebrew  
reads

With his soul only; if from lips it fell,

Echo, back thundered by earth, heaven and  
hell,

Would own "Thou didst create us!" Naught im-  
pedes

We voice the other name, man's most of might,

Awesomely, lovingly: let awe and love

Mutely await their working, leave to sight

All of the issue as—below—above—

Shakespeare's creation rises: one remove,

Through dread—this finite from that infinite.

THE NAMES.

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NOVEMBER 29.

I know there shall dawn a day  
—Is it here on homely earth?  
Is it yonder, worlds away,  
Where the strange and new have birth,  
That Power comes full in play?

Is it here with grass about,  
Under befriending trees,  
When shy buds venture out,  
And the air by mild degrees  
Puts winter's death past doubt?

Is it up amid whirl and roar  
Of the elemental flame  
Which star-flecks heaven's dark floor,  
That, new yet still the same,  
Full in play comes Power once more?

Somewhere, below, above,  
Shall a day dawn—this I know—  
When Power, which vainly strove  
My weakness to o'erthrow,  
Shall triumph. I breathe, I move,

I truly am, at last!  
For a veil is rent between  
Me, and the truth which passed

Fitful, half-grieved, half-seen,  
Grasped at,—not gained, held fast.

ASOLANDO.

NOVEMBER 30.

Recorded motion, breath or look of hers,  
Which poured forth would present you one pure  
glass,  
Mirror you plain—as God's sea, glassed in gold,  
His saints—the perfect soul Pompilia? Men,  
You must know that a man gets drunk with truth  
Stagnant inside him! Oh, they've killed her,  
Sirs!  
Can I be calm?

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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At eve we heard the Angelus; she turned—  
“I told you I could neither read nor write.  
My life stopped with the play-time: I will learn,  
If I begin to live again; but you—  
Who are a priest—wherefore do you not read  
The service at this hour? Read Gabriel's song,  
The lesson, and then read the little prayer  
To Raphael, proper for us travellers!”

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

## DECEMBER.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and light,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;

Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

TENNYSON.

DECEMBER 1.

Heap logs and let the blaze laugh out!

PARACELSUS.

Praise the good log-fire; Winter howls without.  
Crowd closer let us!

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC.

DECEMBER 2.

'Tis willed so,—That man's life be lived, first to  
last,  
Up and down, through and through—not in por-  
tions, forsooth,  
To pick and to choose from. Our shuttles fly  
fast,  
We are living, not life sole and whole: as age—  
youth,  
So death completes living, shows life in its truth.

APOLLO AND THE FATES.

“But time escapes:

Live now or never!”

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.



DECEMBER 3.

At first you say, "The whole, or chief  
Of difficulties, is Belief."  
Could I believe one thoroughly,  
The rest were simple. What? Am I  
An idiot, do you think,—a beast?  
Prove to me, only that the least  
Command of God is God's, indeed,  
And what injunction shall I need  
To pay obedience? Death so nigh,  
When time must end, eternity  
Begin,—and cannot I compute,  
Weigh loss and gain together, suit  
My actions to the balance drawn,  
And give my body to be sawn  
Asunder, hacked in pieces, tied  
To horses, stoned, burned, crucified,  
Like any martyr of the list?  
How gladly!—if I made acquist,  
Through the brief minute's fierce annoy,  
Of God's eternity of joy.

EASTER-DAY.

DECEMBER 4.

And He, whose eye detects a spark  
Even where, to man's, the whole seems dark,  
May well see flame where each beholder

Acknowledges the embers smolder.  
But I, a mere man, fear to quit  
The clew God gave me as most fit  
To guide my footsteps through life's maze,  
Before Himself discerns all ways  
Open to reach him; I, a man  
Able to mark where faith began  
To swerve aside, till from its summit  
Judgment drops her damning plummet,  
Pronouncing such a fatal space  
Departed from the Founder's base:  
He will not bid me enter, too,  
But rather sit, as now I do,  
Awaiting His return outside.  
— 'Twas thus my reason straight replied,  
And joyously I turned, and pressed  
The garment's skirt upon my breast,  
Until, afresh its light suffusing me  
That I should wait here lonely and coldly,  
Instead of rising, entering boldly,  
Baring truth's face, and letting drift  
Her veils of lies as they choose to shift?  
Do these men praise Him? I will raise  
My voice up to their point of praise!  
I see the error; but above  
The scope of error, see the love,—  
O, love of those first Christian days!

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

DECEMBER 5.

Learn one lesson hence  
Of many which whatever lives should teach:  
This lesson, that our human speech is naught,  
Our human testimony false, our fame  
And human estimation words and wind.  
Why take the artistic way to prove so much?  
Because, it is the glory and good of Art,  
That Art remains the one way possible  
Of speaking truth, to mouths like mine at least.  
How look a brother in the face and say,  
"Thy right is wrong, eyes hast thou yet art  
blind;  
Thine ears are stuffed and stopped, despite their  
length;  
And oh, the foolishness thou countest faith!"  
Say this as silverly as tongue can troll—  
The anger of the man may be endured,  
The shrug, the disappointed eyes of him  
Are not so bad to bear—but here's the plague  
That all this trouble comes of telling truth,  
Which truth, by when it reaches him, looks false,  
Seems to be just the thing it would supplant,  
Nor recognizable by whom it left:  
While falsehood would have done the work of  
truth.

But Art,—wherein man nowise speaks to men,

Only to mankind,—Art may tell a truth  
 Obliquely, do the thing shall breed the thought,  
 Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate  
 word;

So you may paint your picture, twice show truth,  
 Beyond mere imagery on the wall,—  
 So, note by note, bring music from your mind,  
 Deeper than ever e'en Beethoven dived,—  
 So write a book shall mean beyond the facts,  
 Suffice the eye and save the soul beside.

And save the soul! If this intent save mine,—  
 If the rough ore be rounded to a ring,  
 Render all duty which good ring should do,  
 And, failing grace, succeed in guardianship,—  
 Thy rare gold ring of verse (the poet praised)  
 Linking our England to his Italy!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

DECEMBER 6.

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the  
 bag of one bee:

All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the  
 heart of one gem:

In the core of one pearl all the shade and the  
 shine of the sea;

Breath and bloom, shade and shine,—wonder,  
 wealth, and—how far above them—

Truth, that's brighter than gem,  
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—  
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all  
were for me.                      SUMMUM BONUM.

DECEMBER 7.

No, be man and nothing more—  
Man who, as man conceiving, hopes and fears,  
And craves and deprecates, and loves, and  
loathes,  
And bids God help him, till death touch his eyes  
And show God granted most denying all.

Man I am and man would be Love—merest man  
and nothing more.

Bid me seem no other! Eagles boast of pinions—  
let them soar!

I may put forth angel's plumage, once un-  
manned, but not before.

Now on earth, to stand suffices,—nay, if kneel-  
ing serves, to kneel:

Here you front me, here I find the all of heaven  
that earth can feel:

Sense looks straight,—not over, under,—perfect  
sees beyond appeal.

Good you are and wise, full circle; what to me  
were more outside?

Wiser wisdom, better goodness? Ah, such want  
 the angel's wide  
 Sense to take and hold and keep them! Mine at  
 least has never tried.

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES.

DECEMBER 8.

Why? Because all I haply can and do,  
 All that I am now, all I hope to be,—  
 Whence comes it save from fortune setting free  
 Body and soul the purpose to pursue,  
 God traced for both? If fetters, not a few,  
 Of prejudice, convention, fall from me,  
 These shall I bid men—each in his degree  
 Also God-guided—bear, and gayly, too?

But little do or can the best of us:  
 That little is achieved through Liberty.  
 Who, then, dares hold, emancipated thus,  
 His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,  
 Who live, love, labor freely, nor discuss  
 A brother's right to freedom. That is why.

WHY I AM A LIBERAL.

DECEMBER 9.

Yet my poor spark had for the source, the sun:  
 Thither I sent the great looks which compel  
 Light from its fount: all that I do and am  
 Comes from the truth, or seen or else surmised,  
 Remembered or dinned, as mere man may:

I know just so, nor otherwise. As I know,  
I speak,—what should I know, then, and how  
speak

Were there a wild mistake of eye or brain  
As to recorded governance above?  
If my own breath, only, blew coal alight  
I styled celestial and the morning star?  
I, who in this world act resolvedly,  
Dispose of men, their bodies and their souls,  
As they acknowledge or gainsay the light  
I show them,—shall I, too, lack courage?—leave  
I, too, the front of me, like those I blame?  
Refuse, with kindred inconsistency,  
To grapple danger whereby souls grow strong?  
I am near the end; but still not at the end;  
All to the very end is trial in life:  
At this stage is the trial of my soul,  
Danger to face, or danger to refuse?  
Shall I dare try the doubt now, or not dare?

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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DECEMBER 10.

I search but cannot see  
What purpose serves the soul that strives, or  
woudn't, tries  
Conclusions with, unless the fruit of victories  
Stay, one and all, stored up and guaranteed its  
own

Forever, by some mode whereby shall be made  
known  
The gain of every life. Death reads the title  
clear—  
What each soul for itself conquered from out  
things here:  
Since, in the seeing soul, all worth lies, I as-  
sert,—  
And naught i' the world, which, save for soul  
that sees, inert  
Was, is, and woud be ever,—stuff for transmut-  
ing,—null  
And void until man's breath evoke the beau-  
tiful—  
But, touched aright, promptly yields each particle  
its tongue  
Of elemental flame,—no matter whence flame  
sprung  
From grime and spice, or else from straw and  
rottenness,  
So long as soul has power to make them burn,  
express  
What lights and warms henceforth, leaves only  
ash behind,  
Howe'er the chance; if soul be privileged to find  
Food so soon that, by first snatch of eye, suck of  
breath,  
It can absorb pure life: or, rather, meeting death



I' the shape of ugliness, by fortunate recoil  
So put on its resource, it find therein a foil  
For a new birth of life,—the challenged soul's  
    response  
To ugliness and death,—creation for the nonce.

————— FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

DECEMBER II.

God has conceded two sights to a man—  
One, of men's whole work, time, completed plan,  
The other, of the minute's work, man's first  
Step to the plan's completeness; what's dis-  
    persed  
Save hope of that supreme step which descried  
Earliest, was meant still to remain untried  
Only to give you heart to take your own  
Step, and there stay—leaving the rest alone?

————— SORDELLO.

    The Past indeed  
Is past, gives way before Life's best and last,  
The all-including Future! What were life  
Did soul stand still therein, forego her strife  
Through the ambiguous Present to the goal  
Of some all-reconciling Future? Soul,  
Nothing has been which shall not bettered be  
Hereafter,—leave the root, by law's decree  
Whence springs the ultimate and perfect tree!

————— PARLEYINGS.

DECEMBER 12.

Fear death? to feel the fog in my throat,  
The mist in my face,  
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote  
I am nearing the place.  
The power of the night, the press of the storm,  
The post of the foe;  
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,  
Yet the strong man must go;  
For the journey is done and the summit attained,  
And the barriers fall,  
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be  
gained,  
The reward of it all.  
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,  
The best and the last!  
I would that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,  
And bade me creep past.  
No! Let me taste the whole of it, fare like my  
peers,  
The heroes of old,  
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears  
Of pain, darkness and cold.  
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,  
The black minute's at end,

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And the element's rage, the fiend-voices that  
    rave,  
    Shall dwindle, shall blend,  
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of  
    pain,  
    Then a light, then thy breast,  
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,  
    And with God be at rest!

PROSPICE.

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DECEMBER 13.

    Cheer up,—  
Be death with me as with Achilles erst,  
Of Man's calamities the last and worst:  
Take it so! By proved potency that still  
Makes perfect, be assured, come what will,  
What once lives never dies—what here attains  
To a beginning, has no end, still gains  
And never loses aught: When, where, how—  
Lies in Law's lap. What's death then? Even  
    now  
With so much knowledge is it hard to bear  
Brief interposing ignorance? Is care  
For a creation found at fault just there—  
There where the heart breaks bond and outruns  
    time,  
To reach not follow what shall be?

PARLEYINGS.

Death is life, just as our daily, momentarily dying body is none the less alive, and ever recruiting new forces of existence. Without death, which is our crape-like, churchyard word for change, for growth, there could be no prolongation of that which we call life. For myself, I deny death as an end of anything. Never say of me that I am dead.

DECEMBER 14.

O thou pale Form, so dimly seen, deep-eyed!  
 I have denied Thee calmly; do I not  
 Pant when I read of Thy consummate deeds?  
 And burn to see Thy calm pure truths outflash  
 The brightest gleams of earth's philosophy?  
 Do I not shake to hear aught question  
 Thee?  
 If I am erring, save me! Madden me!  
 Take from me powers and pleasures! Let me  
     die  
 Ages,—so I see Thee! I am knit round  
 As with a chain by sin and lust and pride;  
 Yet though my wandering dreams have seen all  
     shapes  
 Of strange delight, oft have I stood by  
 Thee—  
 Have I been keeping lonely watch with  
 Thee—

In the damp night by weeping Olivet,  
 Or leaning on Thy bosom, proudly less,  
 Or dying with Thee on the lonely cross,  
 Or witnessing Thy bursting from the tomb.

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DECEMBER 15.

It was not strange I saw no good in man,  
 To overbalance all the wear and waste  
 Of faculties, displained in vain, but born  
 To prosper in some better sphere: and why?  
 In my own heart love had not been made wise  
 To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,  
 To know even hate is but a mask of love's,  
 To see a good in evil, and a hope  
 In ill-success: to sympathize, be proud  
 Of their half-reasons, faint uprisings, dim  
 Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,  
 Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts:—  
 All with a touch of nobleness, despite  
 Their error, upward tending although weak,  
 Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,  
 But dream of him, and guess where he may be,  
 And do their best to climb to him.

PARACELSUS.

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DECEMBER 16.

My soul brought all to a single test—  
 That he, the Eternal First and Last;

Who, in his power, had so surpassed  
All man conceives of what is might,—  
Whose wisdom, too, showed infinite,  
—Would prove as infinitely good:  
Would never (my soul understood;)   
With power to work all love desires,  
Bestow e'en less than man requires;  
That he who endlessly was teaching,  
Above my spirit's utmost reaching,  
What love can do in the leaf or stone,  
(So that to master this alone,  
I must go on learning endlessly)  
Would never need that I, in turn,  
Should point him out defect unheeded,  
And show that God has yet to learn  
What the meanest human creature needed.

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DECEMBER 17.

So my heart be struck,  
What care I, by God's gloved hand or the bare?  
Nor do I much perplex me with aught hard,  
Dubious in the transmitting of the tale;  
No, nor with certain riddles set to solve.  
This life is turning and a passage; pass—  
Still, we march over some flat obstacle  
We made give way before us; solid truth  
In front of it, what notion for the world?  
The moral sense grows by exercise.

'Tis even as a man grew probatively  
Initiated in Godship, set to make  
A fairer moral world than this he finds,  
Guess now what shall be known hereafter.

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

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DECEMBER 18.

For I, a man with men are linked,  
And not a brute with brutes; no gain  
That I experience, must remain  
Unshared; but should my best endeavor  
To share it, fail—subsisteth ever  
God's care above, and I exult  
That God, by God's own ways occult,  
Nay,—doth, I will believe—bring back  
All wanderers to a single track.

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

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DECEMBER 19.

Just for a handful of silver he left us,  
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—  
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,  
Lost all the others she lets us devote;  
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,  
So much was theirs who so little allowed;  
How all our copper had gone for his service!  
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been  
proud!

We that had loved him so, followed him,  
honed him,  
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,  
Learned his great language, caught his clear  
accents,  
Made him our pattern to live and to die!  
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,  
Burns, Shelly, were with us,—they watch from  
their graves!  
He alone breaks from the van and the freeman,  
—He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!  
We shall march prospering,—not through his  
presence;  
Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;  
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his qui-  
escence,  
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire;  
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul  
more,  
One task more declined, one more footpath  
untrod;  
One more devil's—triumph and sorrow for  
angels,  
One wrong more to man, one more insult to  
God!  
Life's night begins; let him never come back to  
us!  
There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,



Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,  
Never glad confident morning again!  
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,  
Menace our heart ere we master his own;  
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,  
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

THE LOST LEADER.

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DECEMBER 20.

The mortal whose brave foot  
Has trod, unscathed, the temple-court so far  
That he descries at length the shrine of shrines,  
Must let no sneering of the demons' eyes,  
Whom he could pass unquailing, fasten now  
Upon him, fairly past their power; no, no—  
He must not stagger, faint, fall down at last,  
Having a charm to baffle them; behold,  
He bares his front: a mortal ventures thus  
Serene amid the echoes, beams and glooms!

PARACELSUS.

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DECEMBER 21.

The very God! Think Ahib: canst thou doubt?  
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving, too;  
So, through the thunder comes a human voice  
Saying, "O, heart I made, a heart beats here!

Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself.  
 Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of none;  
 But love I give thee, with myself to love,  
 And thou must love me, who have died for thee!"

EPISTLE OF KARSHISH.

While, when the scene of life shall shift,  
 And the gay heart be taught to ache s  
 A sorrow and privation take  
 The place of joy—the thing that seems  
 Mere misery, under human schemes,  
 Becomes, regarded by the light  
 As good a gift as joy before.

EASTER-DAY.

DECEMBER 22.

Even as a luminous haze links star to star  
 I would supply all chasms with music, breathing  
 Mysterious motions of the soul, no way  
 To be defined save in strange melodies.  
 Last, having thus revealed all I could love,  
 Having received all love bestowed on it,  
 I would die; preserving so throughout my course  
 God full on me, as I was full on men;  
 He would approve my prayer, I have gone  
 through  
 The loneliness of life; create for me  
 If not for men, or take me to thyself,  
 Eternal, infinite love!

PARACELBUS.

DECEMBER 23.

The world lies under me; and nowhere I detect  
So great a gift as this—God's own—of human  
life.

Shall the dead praise thee; No! The whole live  
world is rife,

God, with thy glory, rather! Life, then, God's  
best of gifts,

For what shall men exchange? For life—when  
so he shifts

The weight and turns the scale, lets life for life  
restore

God's balance, sacrifice the less to gain the more,  
Substitute—for low life, another's or his own—  
Life large and liker God's who gave it; thus  
alone

May life extinguish life that life may trulier be!  
How low this law descends on earth, is not for  
me

To trace: complexed becomes the simple, intri-  
cate,

The plain, when I pursue law's winding. 'Tis the  
straight

Outflow of law I know and name; to law, the  
fount

Fresh from God's footstool, friends, follow while  
I remount.

IVAN IVANOVITCH.

DECEMBER 24.

My own East!

How nearer God we were! He glows above  
 With scarce an intervention, presses close  
 And palpitatingly, his soul o'er ours:  
 We feel him, nor by painful reason know!  
 The everlasting minute of creation  
 Is felt there, now it is as it was then:  
 All changes at his instantaneous will,  
 Not by the operation of a law  
 Whose maker is elsewhere at other work.  
 His hand is still engaged upon his world—  
 Man's praise can forward it, man's prayer sus-  
 pend,  
 For is not God all-mighty? To recast  
 The world, erase old things and make them new,  
 What costs it Him? So, man breathes nobly  
 thus?

LURIA.

DECEMBER 25.

Christ's birthright eve!

Oh, angels that sang erst "On earth, peace!  
 To man good will!"—such peace finds earth to-  
 day!

THE RING AND THE BOOK.

DECEMBER 26.

It's wiser being good than bad;  
 It's safer being meek than fierce;

It's fitter being sane than mad.

My own hope is, a sun will pierce  
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;  
That, after Last, returns the First,  
Though a wide compass round be fetched;  
That what began best, can't end worst,  
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.

APPARENT FAILURE.

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Does the precept run, Believe in Good,  
In Justice, Truth, now understood  
For the first time?—or Believe in Me,  
Who lived and died, yet essentially  
Am Lord of Life?

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

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DECEMBER 27.

An end, a rest! Strange how the notion, once  
Encountered, gathers strength by moments!

Rest!

Where has it kept so long? This throbbing brow  
To cease, this beating heart to cease, all cruel  
And gnawing thoughts to cease! To dare let  
down

My strung, so high-strung brain, to dare un-  
nerve

My harassed o'ertasked frame, to know my place  
My position, my reward, even my failure,

Assigned, made sure forever! To lose myself  
 Among the common creatures of the world,  
 To draw some gain from having been a man,  
 Neither to hope nor fear, to live at length!  
 Even in failure, rest! But rest in truth  
 And power and recompense.

PARACELSUS.

DECEMBER 28.

I, then, in ignorance and weakness,  
 Taking God's help, have attained to think  
 My heart does best to receive in meekness  
 That mode of worship, as most to his mind,  
 Where earthly aids being cast behind,  
 His All in All appears serene  
 With the thinnest human veil between,  
 Letting the mystic lamp, the seven,  
 The many motives of the spirit,  
 Pass, as they list, to earth from heaven.

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

Ah, the Past, the pearl-gift thrown  
 To hogs, time's opportunity we made  
 So light of, only recognized when flown!

JOCHANAN HAKKADOSH.

DECEMBER 29.

'Tis a strange thing: I am dying, Festus,  
 And now that fast the storm of life subsides,

I first perceive how great the whirl has been.  
I was calm then, who am dizzy now—  
Calm in the thick of the tempest, but no less  
A partner of its motion and mixed up  
With its career. The humane is spent,  
And the good boat speeds through the brightening  
    weather;  
But is it earth or sea that heaves below?  
The gulf rolls like a meadow-shell, o'erstrewn  
With ravaged boughs and remnants of the shore;  
And now some islet, loosened from the land,  
Swims past with all its trees, sailing to ocean;  
And now the air is full of uptorn canes,  
Light strippings from the fan-trees, tamarisks  
Unrooted, with their buds still clinging to them,  
All high in the wind. Even so my varied life  
Drifts by me; I am young, old, happy, sad,  
Hoping, desponding, acting, taking rest,  
And all at once: that is, those past conditions  
Float back at once on me. If I select  
Some special epoch from the crowd, 'tis but  
To will, and straight the rest dissolve away,  
And only that particular state is present,  
With all its long-forgotten circumstances  
Distinct and vivid as at first—myself  
A careless looker-on, and nothing more;  
Indifferent and amused, but nothing more.  
And this is death: I understand it all.

New being waits me; new perceptions must  
 Be born in me before I plunge therein;  
 Which last is Death's affair; and while I speak  
 Minute by minute he is filling me  
 With power; and while my foot is on the  
 threshold

Of boundless life—the doors unopened yet,  
 All preparations not complete within—  
 I turn new knowledge upon old events,  
 And the effect is . . . but I must not tell;  
 It is not lawful. Your own turn will come  
 One day. Wait, Festus! You will die like me.

PARACELSUS.

DECEMBER 30.

The poet's age is sad: for why?

In youth, the natural world could show  
 No common object but his eye

At once involved with alien glow—  
 His own soul's iris-bow.

And now a flower is just a flower:

Man, bird, beast, are beast, bird, man—  
 Simply themselves, uninct by dower

Of dyes which, when life's day began,  
 Round each in glory ran.

Friend, did you need an optic glass,



Which were your choice? A lens to drape  
In ruby, emerald, chrysopras,  
Each object—or reveal its shape,  
Clear outlined, past escape.

The naked, very thing?—so clear  
That, when you had the chance to gaze,  
You found its inmost self appear  
Through outer seeming—truth ablaze,  
Not falsehood's fancy-haze?

How many a year, my Asolo,  
Since—one step just from sea to land—  
I found you, loved you, feared you so—  
For natural objects seemed to stand  
Palpably fire-clothed! No—

No mastery of mine o'er these!  
Terror with beauty, like the Bush  
Burning but unconsumed. Bend knees,  
Drop eyes to earthward! Language? Tush!  
Silence 'tis awe decrees.

And now? The lambent flame is—where?  
Lost from the naked world; earth, sky,  
Hill, vale, tree, flower,—Italia's rare  
O'er-running beauty crowds the eye—  
But flame? The bush is bare.

Hill, vale, tree, flower,—they stand distinct,  
 Nature to know and name. What then?  
 A voice spoke thence which straight unlinked  
 Has once my eyelid winked?

No, for the purged ear apprehends  
 Earth's import, not the eye late dazed.  
 The Voice said, "Call my works thy friends!  
 At Nature dost thou shrink amazed?  
 God is it who transcends.

ASOLANDO.

DECEMBER 31.

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,  
 When you set your fancies free,  
 When they pass to where—by death, fools think,  
 imprisoned—  
 Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you  
 loved so,  
 —Pity me?  
 Oh, to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!  
 What had I on earth to do  
 With the slothful, with the mankish, the un-  
 manly?  
 —Being—who?

One who never turned his back but marched  
 breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,  
    wrong would triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
    sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time  
    Greet the unseen with a cheer!  
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should  
    be,  
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on,  
    face ever  
    There as here!"

EPILOGUE.

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